

POETS OF OUR TIME

Poems by Contemporary Poets

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TO
MY WIFE

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INTRODUCTION

THERE are two disabilities under which I suffer—an awkward sentence, but it is horrid to begin with “I.” One is that I appear in this anthology myself, though I must, in candour, say that I did not know this when I undertook an introduction for a friend. The other is that I have already written introductions to anthologies of modern verse compiled by myself. In those introductions I said what I thought : I cannot get out of the habit of saying what I think ; and if I say what I think it is likely that I shall repeat myself. I shall now proceed to repeat myself.

This anthology is compiled by an Englishman who has spent some years in the East : and it was originally undertaken with one eye on the East. The author, knowing Malaysians, Indians, and Chinese, began by selecting such modern English poems as he thought would be appreciated by Eastern readers. He then discovered an interesting thing ; that if he had conceived of the selection as for English readers it would have been very much the same, so he now addresses it both to East and to West.

It is not surprising. Contemporary poetry, the best of it, is lyrical. That is to say, it deals very little with ideas. *Paradise Lost* might present some difficulty to a Chinese who knew nothing of the Christian cosmogony ; *The Prelude* would certainly be largely incomprehensible to one who knew nothing of the political thought, history, and social customs of the West. There has been in our age one such magnificent effort on the heroic scale, Robert Bridges’ *The Testament of Beauty*. How

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many, and what elaborate notes, would be required before an Eastern understood it ; yet many of his lyrics would translate as comprehensibly into any language, as the classic poets of China translate into ours. In the pages of Mr. Arthur Waley we find Po-Chin and the rest of them expressing tender and jovial emotions as familiar to us as to them, singing of gardens and flowers, maidens and children, youth and old age, the pleasures of retirement, of conversation and the bottle, the pathos of death, in a manner which makes an instant and universal appeal. It is with such simple matters that most good modern English verse is concerned ; and a simple lyric may outlive many ambitious monuments.

It is unnecessary to predict the durability or otherwise of the works of Mr. de la Mare, Mr. Sassoon, Mr. Blunden, and the other poets who are represented in this volume. My private opinion is that the age, in spite of its shortage of epics and the general avoidance by the poets of metrical controversy or propaganda, will leave a considerable legacy of beauty and delight behind it ; but I cannot prove it, and a posterity, as remote from us as we are from Herrick, will have the last word. " What often was said but ne'er so well express'd " seems to me to apply to many of the restatements in this book : and I think the period will be held to have been especially notable for the concealed sophistication and variety of its verbal music. To me there are many poems in this book which at once touch the heart, gratify the senses, and please the taste—where the intellect is also stimulated, so much the better, but the other things alone are surely enough.

To some the collection, doubtless, will be like a red rag to a bull, as most of the poets drawn from have felt no inclination to join in the clamour for The New, topical subjects, novel doctrines, deliberately strange forms, or no forms, for their own sakes. Nothing, in every age, stales more rapidly than Modernism ; you cannot become a poet by trying hard ; and real poets

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who merely let themselves alone, however simple their songs, must (without pains) take tinge from their age just by living in it. To some all this is obstinate "traditionalism." Let them think so. What on earth is the use of fighting about it. According to Professor Gilbert Murray there are backward Spanish villages in which the inhabitants take a fierce pleasure in pelting each others' Virgins; there are many in England and America who angrily throw missiles at each others' Muses. It seems a waste of time; in any event the eternal truths about Art and Beauty are not going to be destroyed by mud-slinging.

J. C. SQUIRE.

POETS OF OUR TIME

BABYLON

A.E. (GEORGE RUSSELL)

THE blue dusk ran between the streets : my love
was winged within my mind,
It left to-day and yesterday and thrice a thousand
years behind.
To-day was past and dead for me, for from to-day
my feet had run
Through thrice a thousand years to walk the ways
of ancient Babylon.
On temple top and palace roof the burnished gold
flung back the rays
Of a red sunset that was dead and lost beyond a
million days.
The tower of heaven turns darker blue, a starry
sparkle now begins ;
The mystery and magnificence, the myriad beauty
and the sins
Come back to me. I walk beneath the shadowy
multitude of towers ;
Within the gloom the fountain jets its pallid mist
in lily flowers.
The waters lull me and the scent of many gardens,
and I hear

Familiar voices, and the voice I love is whispering
in my ear.

Oh real as in dream all this ; and then a hand on
mine is laid :

The wave of phantom time withdraws ; and that
young Babylonian maid,

One drop of beauty left behind from all the flowing
of that tide,

Is looking with the self-same eyes, and here in
Ireland by my side.

Oh light our life in Babylon, but Babylon has taken
wings,

While we are in the calm and proud procession of
eternal things.

THE VOICE OF BEAUTY DROWNED

ANON.

Cry from the thicket my heart's bird !
The other birds woke all around ;
Rising with toot and howl they stirred
Their plumage, broke the trembling sound,
They craned their necks, they fluttered wings,
" While we are silent no one sings,
And while we sing you hush your throat,
Or tune your melody to our note."

Cry from the thicket my heart's bird !
The screams and hootings rose again :
They gaped with raucous beaks, they whirred
Their noisy plumage ; small but plain
The lonely hidden singer made
A well of grief within the glade.
" Whist, silly fool, be off," they shout,
" Or we'll come pluck your feathers out."

Cry from the thicket my heart's bird !
Slight and small the lovely cry
Came trickling down, but no one heard ;
Parrot and cuckoo, crow, magpie,
Jarred horrid notes, the jangling jay
Ripped the fine threads of song away ;
For why should peeping chick aspire
To challenge their loud woodland choir ?

Cried it so sweet, that unseen bird ?
Lovelier could no music be,
Clearer than water, soft as curd,
Fresh as the blossomed cherry tree.
How sang the others all around ?
Piercing and harsh, a maddening sound,
With Pretty Poll, Tuwit-tuwoo
Peewit, Caw Caw, Cuckoo-Cuckoo.

How went the song, how looked the bird ?
If I could tell, if I could show
With one quick phrase, one lightning word,
I'd learn you more than poets know ;
For poets, could they only catch
Of that forgotten tune one snatch,
Would build it up in song or sonnet,
And found their whole life's fame upon it.

A PINCH OF SALT

ANON.

WHEN a dream is born in you
With a sudden clamorous pain,
When you know the dream is true
And lovely, with no flaw nor stain,
O then, be careful, or with sudden clutch
You'll hurt the delicate thing you prize so much.

Dreams are like a bird that mocks,
Flirting the feathers of his tail.
When you seize at the salt-box
Over the hedge you'll see him sail.
Old birds are neither caught with salt nor chaff :
They watch you from the apple bough and laugh.

Poet, never chase the dream.
Laugh yourself and turn away.
Mask your hunger, let it seem
Small matter if he come or stay ;
But when he nestles in your hand at last,
Close up your fingers tight and hold him fast.

STAR-TALK

ANON.

" ARE you awake, Gemelli,
This frosty night ? "

" We'll be awake till reveillé,
Which is Sunrise," say the Gemelli,
" It's no good trying to go to sleep :
If there's wine to be got we'll drink it deep,
But rest is hopeless to-night,
But rest is hopeless to-night."

" Are you cold, too, poor Pleiads,
This frosty night ? "

" Yes, and so are the Hyads :
See us cuddle and hug," say the Pleiads,
" All six in a ring : it keeps us warm :
We huddle together like birds in a storm :
It's bitter weather to-night,
It's bitter weather to-night."

" What do you hunt, Orion,
This starry night ? "

" The Ram, the Bull, and the Lion,
And the Great Bear," says Orion,
" With my starry quiver and beautiful belt
I am trying to find a good thick pelt
To warm my shoulders to-night,
To warm my shoulders to-night."

“ Did you hear that, Great She-bear,
This frosty night ? ”

“ Yes, he’s talking of stripping *me* bare
Of my own big fur,” says the She-bear.

“ I’m afraid of the man and his terrible arrow :
The thought of it chills my bones to the marrow,
And the frost so cruel to-night !
And the frost so cruel to-night ! ”

“ How is your trade, Aquarius,
This frosty night ? ”

“ Complaints are many and various
And my feet are cold,” says Aquarius ;
“ There’s Venus objects to Dolphin-scales,
And Mars to Crab-spawn found in my pails,
And the pump has frozen to-night,
And the pump has frozen to-night.”

SONNET

OWEN BARFIELD

BECAUSE the misery of some great men
Made music in the ears of all the world,
And sorrow broke in waves from Shakespeare's pen,
As sonnet after sonnet rose, and curled,
And broke upon the couplet—have I thought
That I, because I suffered much, could sing ?
Yes, I arose a little while and fought
With jagged words, hoping that Pain would wring,
Using my body and soul as instrument,
Beauty from Life to fashion young men's dreams
And sweeten old men's memories—I meant,
Being a wasted torch, to throw my beams
Over the world : laugh not : I tried to make
The Spirit of Man more lovely for your sake.

EXCAVATION

CLIFFORD BAX

If I should meet with the boy that I was,
How should we look ?
What could we say ?
So have I changed in the years that I think
Both would be dumb.

Yet there is nothing that came from without—
Nothing of new
Built on the old.
What I am now was asleep in me then,
Waiting its hour.

Slowly, as men who unbury a vast
City that lay
Sunken in sand,
Thought and the powerful spades of the world
Dig out the self.

FAME

CLIFFORD BAX

FAME ? I have never wished it . . . Ah !
You smile. But you mistake the cause. . . .
Though London thronged about me, men
In Cardiff, Aberdeen, and Cork
Would still care nothing. Could I rest
Though all Great Britain praised me ? Why,
Once I had packed and gone to France,
What should I be ? Or give me France—
Germany—Europe—is there not
The Wall of China ? Millions there
Would go benighted still : or say
That all the West and all the East
Brought laurels—what ambitious man
Could, with a steady pride, behold
The moon's unagitated light,
The cold look of neglectful stars ?
No ! Will a swimmer run ten miles
To paddle in a three-foot pool ?

MIGRATION

CLIFFORD BAX

OLDER than I are the houses
By which I am walking—
Twenty or thirty years older ;
And when they were builded,
Where, and what manner of creature
Was I who behold them ?

What was I doing, I wonder,
When over those workmen
Floated or shimmered an April
Or June that I knew not—
I to whom earth and her builders
And houses were nothing ?

Here to this life I have travelled
From far—across mountain,
Ocean, and plain ; and, it may be,
Remember, though little,
More than the swallows in England
Remember of Egypt.

TARANTELLA

HILAIRE BELLOC

Do you remember an Inn,
Miranda ?
Do you remember an Inn ?
And the tedding and the spreading
Of the straw for a bedding,
And the fleas that tease in the High Pyrenees,
And the wine that tasted of the tar ?
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers
(Under the dark of the vine veranda) ?
Do you remember an Inn, Miranda,
Do you remember an Inn ?
And the cheers and the jeers of the young muleteers
Who hadn't got a penny,
And who weren't paying any,
And the hammer at the doors and the Din ?
And the Hip ! Hop ! Hap !
Of the clap
Of the hands to the twirl and the swirl
Of the girl gone chancing,
Glancing,
Dancing,
Backing and advancing,
Snapping of the clapper to the spin
Out and in—
And the Ting, Tong, Tang of the guitar !
Do you remember an Inn,
Miranda ?
Do you remember an Inn ?

Never more ;
Miranda,
Never more.
Only the high peaks hoar :
And Aragon a torrent at the door.
No sound
In the walls of the Halls where falls
The tread
Of the feet of the dead to the ground.
No sound :
Only the boom
Of the far Waterfall like Doom.

NOX MORTIS

PAUL BEWSHER

THE afternoon
 Flutters and dies :
The fairy moon
 Burns in the skies
As they grow darker, and the first stars shine
On Night's rich mantle—purple like warm wine

On each white road
 Begins to crawl
The heavy toad :
 The night-birds call,
And round the trees the swift bats flit and wheel,
While from the barns the rats begin to steal.

So now must I,
 Bird of the night,
Towards the sky
 Make wheeling flight,
And bear my poison o'er the gloomy land,
And let it loose with hard unsparing hand.

The chafers boom
 With whirring wings,
And haunt the gloom
 Which twilight brings—
So in nocturnal travel do I wail
As through the night the wingéd engines sail.

Death, Grief, and Pain
Are what I give.
O that the slain
Might live—might live !
I know them not, for I have blindly killed,
And nameless hearts with nameless sorrow filled.

Thrice curséd War
Which bids that I
Such death should pour
Down from the sky.
O, Star of Peace, rise swiftly in the East,
That from such slaying men may be released.

A DAY THAT IS BOUNDLESS AS YOUTH

LAURENCE BINYON

A DAY that is boundless as youth
And gay with delight to be born,
Where the waves flash and glide over sands
In their pure image rippled and worn ;
Where laughter is young on the air
As the race of young feet patters light :
Linkéd shadows run dancing before
In the midst of the infinite light !
On a violet horizon asleep
One milky sail glimmers afar ;
And our spirits are free of the world
With nothing to bind or to bar ;
With no thought but the thoughts of a child :—
O golden the day and the hour !
The strong sea is charmed from his rage,
And the waste is more fair than a flower.

O WORLD, BE NOBLER

LAURENCE BINYON

O WORLD, be nobler, for her sake !

If she but knew thee what thou art,
What wrongs are borne, what deeds are done
In thee, beneath thy daily sun,

Know'st thou not that her tender heart
For pain and very shame would break ?
O World, be nobler, for her sake !

JOHN WINTER

LAURENCE BINYON

WHAT ails John Winter, that so oft
Silent he sits apart ?
The neighbours cast their looks on him ;
But deep he hides his heart.

In Deptford streets the houses small
Huddle forlorn together.
Whether the wind blow or be still,
'Tis soiled and sorry weather.

But over these dim roofs arise
Tall masts of ocean ships.
Whenever John Winter looked at them
The salt blew on his lips.

He cannot pace the street about,
But they stand before his eyes !
The more he shuns them, the more proud
And beautiful they rise.

He turns his head, but in his ear
The steady Trade-Winds run,
And in his eye the endless waves
Ride on into the sun.

His little child at evening said,
" Now tell us, dad, a tale
Of naked men that shoot with bows,
Tell of the spouting whale ! "

He told old tales, his eyes were bright,
His wife looked up to see,
And smiled on him ; but in the midst
He ended suddenly.

He bade his boys good-night, and kissed
And held them to his breast.
They wondered and were still, to feel
Their lips so fondly pressed.

He sat absorbed in silent gloom.
His wife lifted her head
From sewing, and stole up to him,
“ What ails you, John ? ” she said.

He spoke no word. A silent tear
Fell softly down her cheek.
She knelt beside him, and his hand
Was on her forehead meek.

But even as his tender touch
Her dumb distress consoled,
The mighty waves danced in his eyes
And through the silence rolled.

There fell a soft November night,
Restless with gusts that shook
The chimneys, and beat wildly down
The flames in the chimney nook.

John Winter lay beside his wife,
'Twas past the mid of night.
Softly he rose, and in dead hush
Stood stealthily upright.

Softly he came where slept his boys,
And kissed them in their bed ;
One stretched his arms out in his sleep :
At that he turned his head.

And now he bent above his wife,
She slept a peace serene,
Her patient soul was in the peace
Of breathing slumber seen.

At last, he kissed one aching kiss,
Then shrank again in dread,
And from his own home guiltily
And like a thief he fled.

But now with darkness and the wind
He breathes a breath more free,
And walks with calmer steps, like one
Who goes with destiny.

And see, before him, the great masts
Tower with all their spars
Black on the dimness, soaring bold
Among the mazy stars.

In stormy rushings through the air
Wild scents the darkness filled,
And with a fierce forgetfulness
His drinking nostril thrilled.

He hasted with quick feet, he hugged
The wildness to his breast,
As one who goes the only way
To set his heart at rest.

When morning glimmered, a great ship
Dropt gliding down the shore.
John Winter coiled the anchor ropes
Among his mates once more.

CHINESE POND

EDMUND BLUNDEN

CHINESE pond is quick with leeches :
From its island knoll of beeches
 Peers the temple, standing yet,
 Heaped with dead leaves, all alone.

Mildew dims the lacquered panels
Where the channering insect channels ;
 Blood-red dragons pine and fret,
 Who glared so grimly thereupon.

Mother-pearl and pink shells once
In formal geometrics
 Counterchanged the inner wall :
 Frieze and hangings, both are gone.

Knavish robin reconnoitres,
Unabashed the woodmouse loiters,
 Brown owls hoot at shadow-fall,
 Deathwatch ticks and beetles drone.

SICK-BED

EDMUND BLUNDEN

HALF-DEAD with fever, here in bed I sprawl,
In candlelight watching the odd flies crawl
Across the ceiling's bleak white desolation ;—
Can they not yet have heard of gravitation ?—
Hung upside down above the precipice
To doze the night out ; ignorance is bliss !
Your blood be on your heads, ridiculous flies.

Dizzying with these, I glare and tantalize
At the motley hides of books which moulder here :
“ On Choosing a Career,” “ Ten Thousand a Year ”
“ Ellis on Sheep,” “ Lamb's Tales,” a doleful Gay,
A has-been Young, dead “ Lives,” vermillion Gray,
And a whole corps of 1790 twelves.
My eye goes blurred along these gruesome shelves,
My brain whirs “ Poems of . . . Poems of . . . ”
like a clock ;
And I stare for my life at the square black ebony
block
Of darkness in the open window-frame.
Then my thoughts flash in one white searching flame
On my little lost daughter ; I gasp and grasp to see
Her shy smile pondering out who I might be,
Her rathe-ripe rounded cheeks, near-violet eyes.
Long may I stare ; her stony fate denies
The vision of her, though tired Fancy's sight
Scrawl with pale curves the dead and scornful night.

All the night's full of questing flight and calls
Of owls and bats, white owls from time-struck walls,
Bats with their shrivelled speech and dragonish
wings.

Beneath, a strange step crunches the ash path, where
None goes so late, I know : the mute vast air
Wakes to a great sigh.

Now the murmurings,
Cricks, rustlings, knocks, all forms of tiny sound
That have long been happening in my room half-
heard,

Grow fast and fierce, each one a ghostly word.

I feel the grutching pixies hedge me round ;

"Folly," sneers courage (and flies). Stealthily
creaks

The threshold, fingers fumble, terror speaks,

And, bursting into sweats, I muffle deep

My face in pillows, praying for merciful sleep.

EASTERN TEMPEST

EDMUND BLUNDEN

THAT flying angel's torrent cry
Will hurl the mountains through the sky !
A wind like fifty winds at once
Through the bedragoned kingdom runs,
An army of rain slants icy stings
At many a wretch afield who clings
His cloak of straw, with glistening spines
Like a prodigious porcupine's.
The reptile grasses by his path
Wind sleek as unction from that Wrath
Which with a glassy claw uproots
The broad-leaved *kiri*, flays and loots
Torn and snarled sinews, leaves for dead
The young crops with the shining head,
While blotched blunt melons darkly dot
The slaughtered swathes like cannon-shot.
The lotus in each pond upheaves
Its sacred, slow, appealing leaves,
And many a bush with wrestling jerk
Defies the Dæmon's murderous work—
Yet nature stares white-lipped, to read
In Chance's eye what desperate deed ?

A kinder god discerns, replies,
And stills the land's storm-shouts to sighs ;
The clouds in massy folds apart
Disclose the day's bright bleeding heart,
Huge plumes and scarves black-tossing wide
As if a Kubla Khan had died !
From flame to flame the vision glows,
Till all the pools of heaven uncloze
The lotus-light, the hue, the balm
Of wisdom infinitely calm.

FAR EAST

EDMUND BLUNDEN

OLD hamlets with your fragrant flowers
And honey for the bee,
Your curtained taverns, chiming towers,
Droning songs and twilight hours
And nodding industry—

Fine fields, wide-lapped, whose loveliest-born
Day's first bright cohort finds,
And steals away ; whose lustier corn
The red-faced churl invades at morn
And proud as Cæsar binds—

Uplands and groves that from the West
Have the last word for me,
Think not your image in my breast
Was darkened when I sang my best
Beside an Eastern sea.

Beside an Eastern sea the pines
In tufty spinneys drowse,
The firefly-grass beneath them shines
Blue-lanterned, and the chaliced vines
Climb witch-like to the boughs ;

And girdled green there bask the plains
Where, with his timeless smiles,
And mushroom-hat, brown Vigour gains
His spindling roots, his haulms, his grains—
The Oriental Giles.

He serves a god much like your own,
Who, peeping from the rows,
Brings gourds the greatest ever grown,
And peerless pumpkins ; smooths the down
Of these fruits, lacquers those.

Thence the young child at home awaits,
Bright-peering as a mouse,
Her share of country delicates,
And chatters bold to her young mates
About the smoky house.

The bronze cicada twangs all day,
And the silver-soft at night
Cools the snake's thicket by the way
Where heaps the sturdy disarray
Of husbandry's delight.

In rural music bold or frail
Contentment's anthem fills,
And, roving the rude-ripened vale,
If restless spirits sometime fail,
Here too are heavenly hills.

Sleep's master-dream there stands alone :
The mount of East and West !
The still hour come, his monstrous cone
Is a timid flower this morning blown,
Now folded like the rest.

THE AUTHOR'S LAST WORDS TO HIS STUDENTS *

EDMUND BLUNDEN

FORGIVE what I, adventuring highest themes,
Have spoiled and darkened, and the awkward hand
That longed to point the moral of man's dreams
And shut the wicket-gates of fairyland :
So by too harsh intrusion
Left colourless confusion.

For even the glories that I most revered,
Seen through my gloomed perspective in strange
mood,
Were not what to our British seers appeared ;
I spoke of peace, I made a solitude,
Herding with deathless graces
My hobbling commonplaces.

Forgive that eyeless lethargy which chilled
Your ardours and I fear dimmed much fine gold—
What your bright passion, leaping ages, thrilled
To find and claim, and I yet dared withhold ;
These and all chance offences
Against your finer senses.

And I will ever pray for your souls' health,
Remembering how, deep-tasked yet eager-eyed,
You loved imagination's commonwealth,
Following with smiling wonder a frail guide
Who hears beyond the ocean
The voice of your devotion.

* In the School of English Literature, at the Tokyo Imperial University, 1924-27.

ATLANTIS

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

WHAT poets sang in Atlantis ? Who can tell
The epics of Atlantis or their names ?
The sea hath its own murmurs, and sounds not
The secrets of its silences beneath,
And knows not any cadences enfolded
When the last bubbles of Atlantis broke
Among the quieting of its heaving floor.

O, years and tides and leagues and all their billows
Can alter not man's knowledge of men's hearts—
While trees and rocks and clouds include our being
We know the epics of Atlantis still :
A hero gave himself to lesser men,
Who first misunderstood and murdered him,
And then misunderstood and worshipped him ;
A woman was lovely and men fought for her,
Towns burnt for her, and men put men in bondage,
But she put lengthier bondage on them all ;
And wanderer toiled among all the isles
That fleck this turning star or shifting sea,
Or lonely purgatories of the mind,
In longing for his home or his lost love.

Poetry is founded on the hearts of men :
Though in Nirvana or the Heavenly courts
The principle of beauty shall persist,
Its body of poetry, the body of man,
Is but a terrene form, a terrene use,
That swifter being will not loiter with ;
And, when mankind is dead and the world cold,
Poetry's immortality will pass.

LIFE

FRANCIS BURROWS

WHEN I consider this, that bare
Water and earth and common air
Combine together to compose
A being who breathes and stands and goes,
With eyes to see the sun, with brain
To contemplate his origin,
I marvel not at death and pain
But rather how he should have been.

A DYNASTY

WITTER BYNNER

BESIDE the reckless music of a line of waterfalls,
Tuning my toes in the songs they throw away,
I sit so still a spider takes my knees for his walls,
And I do not know what year it is, I know only the
day

And the little singing moment when a spotted moth
and I

Are untroubled with each other as the shade is with
the sun,

She at last convinced that I am glad a worm can fly
And I understanding why her tail moves up and
down.

Two pigeons are intoning, like carriers in Hangchow,
Two cat-birds are fighting, like generals toward
Peking ;

And if I were not sitting here, there might be much
to do.

But the best the world has taught me is to be at
ease and sing,

To disregard the generals, the conjurer that rules,
The thousand bits of nonsense that make a matter
wise,

And to share the lighter reason of a dynasty of fools
Whose premiers are waterfalls, whose courtiers
butterflies.

THE DROMEDARY

A. Y. CAMPBELL

IN dreams I see the Dromedary still,
As once in a gay park I saw him stand :
A thousand eyes in vulgar wonder scanned
His humps and hairy neck, and gazed their fill
At his lank shanks and mocked with laughter shrill.
He never moved : and if his Eastern land
Flashed on his eye with stretches of hot sand,
It wrung no mute appeal from his proud will.
He blinked upon the rabble lazily ;
And still some trace of majesty forlorn
And a coarse grace remained : his head was high,
Though his gaunt flanks with a great mange were
worn :
There was not any yearning in his eye,
But on his lips and nostril infinite scorn.

A BALLADE OF A BOOK-REVIEWER

G. K. CHESTERTON

I HAVE not read a rotten page
Of "Sex-Hate" or "The Social Test,"
And here comes "Husks" and "Heritage" . . .
O Moses, give us all a rest !
"Ethics of Empire" ! . . . I protest
I will not even cut the strings,
I'll read "Jack Redskin on the Quest,"
And feed my brain with better things.

Somebody wants a Wiser Age
(He also wants me to invest) ;
Somebody likes the Finnish Stage
Because the jesters do not jest ;
And grey with dust is Dante's crest,
The bell of Rabelais soundless swings ;
And the winds come out of the west
And feed my brain with better things.

Lord of our laughter and our rage,
Look on us with our sins oppressed !
I, too, have trodden mine heritage,
Wickedly wearying of the best.
Burn from my brain and from my breast
Sloth, and the cowardice that clings,
And stiffness and the soul's arrest :
And feed my brain with better things.

ENVOI

Prince, you are host and I am guest,
Therefore I shrink from cavillings . . .
But I should have that fizz suppressed
And feed my brain with better things.

THUNDERSTORMS

W. H. DAVIES

My mind has thunderstorms,
That brood for heavy hours :
Until they rain me words,
My thoughts are drooping flowers
And sulking, silent birds.

Yet come, dark thunderstorms,
And brood your heavy hours ;
For when you rain me words
My thoughts are dancing flowers
And joyful singing birds.

SWEET STAY-AT-HOME

W. H. DAVIES

SWEET Stay-at-Home, sweet Well-content,
Thou knowest of no strange continent :
Thou hast not felt thy bosom keep
A gentle motion with the deep ;
Thou hast not sailed in Indian seas,
Where scent comes forth in every breeze.
Thou hast not seen the rich grape grow
For miles, as far as eyes can go ;
Thou hast not seen a summer's night
When maids could sew by a worm's light ;
Nor the North Sea in spring send out
Bright trees that like birds flit about
In solid cages of white ice—
Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Love-one-place.
Thou hast not seen black fingers pick
White cotton when the bloom is thick,
Nor heard black throats in harmony ;
Nor hast thou sat on stones that lie
Flat on the earth, that once did rise
To hide proud kings from common eyes.
Thou hast not seen plains full of bloom
Where green things had little room,
They pleased the eye like fairer flowers—
Sweet Stay-at-Home, all these long hours.
Sweet Well-content, sweet Love-one-place,
Sweet, simple maid, bless thy dear face ;
For thou hast made more homely stuff
Nurture thy gentle self enough ;
I love thee for a heart that's kind—
Not for the knowledge in thy mind.

LOVELY DAMES

W. H. DAVIES

FEW are my books, but my small few have told
Of many a lovely dame that lived of old ;
And they have made me see those fatal charms
Of Helen, which brought Troy so many harms :
And lovely Venus, when she stood so white
Close to her husband's forge in its red light.
I have seen Dian's beauty in my dreams,
When she had trained her looks in all the streams
She crossed to Latmos and Endymion ;
And Cleopatra's eyes, that hour they shone
The brighter for a pearl she drank to prove
How poor it was compared to her rich love :
But when I look on thee, love, thou dost give
Substance to those fine ghosts, and make them live.

THE CAPTIVE LION

W. H. DAVIES

THOU that in fury with thy knotted tail
Hast made this iron floor thy beaten drum ;
That now in silence walk'st thy little space—
Like a sea-captain—careless what may come :

What power has brought thy majesty to this,
Who gave those eyes their dull and sleepy look ;
Who took their lightning out, and from thy throat
The thunder when the whole wide forest shook ?

It was that man who went again, alone,
Into thy forest dark—Lord, he was brave !
That man a fly has killed, whose bones are left
Unburied till an earthquake digs his grave.

THE EXAMPLE

W. H. DAVIES

HERE's an example from
A Butterfly ;
That on a rough, hard rock
Happy can lie ;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard
No care take I ;
I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly ;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

THE MOON

W. H. DAVIES

THY beauty haunts me heart and soul,
Oh thou fair Moon, so close and bright ;
Thy beauty makes me like the child
That cries aloud to own thy light :
The little child that lifts each arm
To press thee to her bosom warm.

Though there are birds that sing this night
With thy white beams across their throats,
Let my deep silence speak for me
More than for them their sweetest notes :
Who worships thee till music fails,
Is greater than thy nightingales.

THE KINGFISHER

W. H. DAVIES

It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
And left thee all her lovely hues ;
And, as her mother's name was Tears,
So runs it in thy blood to choose
For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
In company with trees that weep.

Go you and, with such glorious hues,
Live with proud Peacocks in green parks ;
On lawns as smooth as shining glass,
Let every feather show its mark ;
Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings
Before the windows of proud kings.

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain ;
Thou hast no proud ambitious mind ;
I also love a quiet place
That's green, away from all mankind ;
A lonely pool, and let a tree
Sigh with her bosom over me.

I HEARD THE OLD MEN

*(Lines on being told that I had all the illusions
of youth)*

EDWARD DAVISON

I HEARD the old men talk together,
Nodding grey heads one to another,
And dimly seen from my window-sill
(So cool was dusk and the air so still)
The blue tobacco-cloud under me
Blossomed up from the vanishing tree
Till darkness gathered the phantom flower.
But under the leafage hour by hour
One to another I heard them say
Yesterday—Yesterday—Yesterday !

It is all true that men born long ago
Pondered and spoke even as I do now,
Planning to mend earth's sorrows : even so
Do I. With earnest voice and serious brow
Each learned life's lurking secrets from the wise,
Like me they loved, growing old in discontent,
Till all illusion faded from their eyes ;
Beauty's mirage, brief and impermanent,
And first love's all-too-soon frustrated dream,
And impulse mocked and hope and faith belied,
All that was highest in the heart's esteem
Betrayed, exhausted, hurt, unsatisfied.

It is not all a dream, though when I speak
The old men smile and cowardice defers ;
Ambition, Hope and Love seem strangely weak
And perishable things,—poor travellers
Treading an alien land where the sea-mark
Looms in the mist obscure, and yet they know
It is not all illusion, for the dark
Sonorous sea sucks at the rocks below
And men grow deaf in age.

I'll not believe
That time can quench the ardour of the heart
Or bate one impulse out of youth, or grieve
Its mocked ideal dream. I will not part
With any sympathy for common things
That yesterday thought beautiful or good,
Not one enthusiasm that beauty brings
Will I let sleep, but die within this mood
Rather than lose another love I had,
Having so few surviving yesterday.

It is not all a dream. I will be glad
That there's some spirit treading upon earth
(Though scarcely heard, yet felt in every breath
Of the free air), a spirit of rebirth
In their own sons, for those who suffered death ;
For there are poets wakening into song
And soldiers seeking peace on earth again.
I will believe in life while I am young,
For once grown old there's no believing then.

SILVER

WALTER DE LA MARE

SLOWLY, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon ;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees ;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch ;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog ;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep ;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and silver eye ;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

THE LISTENERS

WALTER DE LA MARE

Is there anybody there ? " said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door ;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor :
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head :
And he smote upon the door again a second time ;
" Is there anybody there ? " he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller ;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men :
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark
stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky ;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head :—

“ Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,” he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still
house
From the one man left awake :
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

THE RAINBOW

WALTER DE LA MARE

I SAW the lovely arch
Of Rainbow span the sky,
The gold sun burning
As the rain swept by.

In bright-ringed solitude
The showery foliage shone
One lovely moment,
And the Bow was gone.

THE ENGLISHMAN

WALTER DE LA MARE

I MET a sailor in the woods,
A silver ring wore he,
His hair hung black, his eyes shone blue,
And thus he said to me :

“ What country, say, of this round earth,
What shore of what salt sea,
Be this, my son, I wander in,
And looks so strange to me ? ”

Says I, “ O foreign sailorman,
In England now you be,
This is her wood, and there her sky,
And that her roaring sea.”

He lifts his voice yet louder,
“ What smell be this,” says he,
“ My nose on the sharp morning air
Snuffs up so greedily ? ”

Says I, “ It is wild roses
Do smell so winsomely,
And winy briar too,” says I,
“ That in these thickets be.”

“ And oh ! ” says he, “ what leetle bird
Is singing in yon high tree,
So every shrill and long-drawn note
Like bubbles breaks in me ? ”

Says I, " It is the mavis
That perches in the tree,
And sings so shrill, and sings so sweet,
When dawn comes up the sea."

At which he fell a-musing,
And fixed his eye on me,
As one alone 'twixt light and dark
A spirit thinks to see.

" England ! " he whispers soft and harsh,
" England ! " repeated he,
" And briar, and rose, and mavis,
A-singing in yon high tree.

" Ye speak me true, my leetle son,
So—so, it came to me,
A-drifting landwards on a spar,
And grey dawn on the sea.

" Ay, ay, I could not be mistook ;
I knew them leafy trees,
I knew that land so witcherie sweet,
And that old noise of seas.

" Though here I've sailed a score of years,
And heard 'em, dream or wake,
Lap small and hollow 'gainst my cheek,
On sand and coral break ;

" ' Yet now,' my leetle son, says I,
A-drifting on the wave,
' That land I see so safe and green
Is England, I believe.

“ ‘ And that there wood is English wood,
And this here cruel sea,
The selfsame old blue ocean
Years gone remembers me,

“ ‘ A-sitting with my bread and butter
Down ahind yon chitterin’ mill ;
And this same Marinere ’—(that’s me),
‘ Is that same leetle Will !—

“ ‘ That very same wee leetle Will
Eating his bread and butter there,
A-looking on the broad blue sea
Betwixt his yaller hair ! ’

“ And here be I, my son, throwed up
Like corpses from the sea,
Ships, stars, winds, tempests, pirates past,
Yet leetle Will I be ! ”

He said no more, that sailorman,
But in a reverie
Stared like the figure of a ship
With painted eyes to sea.

THE ISLE OF LONE

WALTER DE LA MARE

THREE dwarfs there were which lived in an isle,
And the name of that isle was Lone,
And the names of the dwarfs were Alliolyle,
Lallerie, Muziomone.

Their house was small and sweet of the sea,
And pale as the Malmsey wine ;
Their bowls were three, and their beds were three,
And their nightcaps white were nine.

Their beds they were made of the holly-wood,
Their combs of the tortoise's shell,
Three basins of silver in corners there stood,
And three little ewers as well.

Green rushes, green rushes lay thick on the floor,
For light beamed a gobbet of wax ;
There were three wooden stools for whatever they
wore
On their humpity-dumpity backs.

So each would lie on a drowsy pillow
And watch the moon in the sky—
And hear the parrot scream to the billow,
The billow roar reply—

Parrots of sapphire and sulphur and amber,
Amethyst, azure and green,
While apes in the palm trees did scramble and
clamber,
Hairy and hungry and lean.

All night long with bubbles a-glisten
The ocean cried under the moon,
Till ape and parrot too sleepy to listen
To sleep and slumber were gone.

Then from three small beds the dark hours' while
In a house in the Island of Lone
Rose the snoring of Lallerie, Alliolyle,
The snoring of Muziomone.

But soon as ever came peep of sun
On coral and feathery tree,
Three night-capped dwarfs to the surf would run
And soon were a-bob in the sea.

At six they went fishing, at nine to snare
Young foxes in the dells,
At noon in the shade on sweet fruits did fare,
And blew in their twisted shells.

Dark was the sea they gambolled in,
And thick with silver fish,
Dark as green glass blown clear and thin
To be a monarch's dish.

They sate to sup in a jasmine bower,
Lit pale with flies of fire,
Their bowls the hue of the iris flower,
And lemon their attire.

Sweet wine in little cups they sipped,
And golden honeycomb
Into their bowls of cream they dipped,
Whipt light and white as foam.

Now Alliolyle where the sand-flower blows
Taught three old apes to sing—
Taught three old apes to dance on their toes
And caper around in a ring.

They yelled them hoarse and they croaked them
sweet,
They twirled them about and around,
To the noise of their voices they danced with their
feet,
They stamped with their feet on the ground.

But down to the shore skipped Lallerie,
His parrot on his thumb,
And the twain they scritch'd in mockery,
While the dancers go and come.

So, alas ! in the evening, rosy and still,
Light-haired Lallerie
Bitterly quarrelled with Alliolyle
By the yellow-sanded sea.

The rising moon swam sweet and large
Before their furious eyes,
And they rolled and rolled to the coral marge
Where the surf for ever cries.

Too late, too late, comes Muziomone :
Clear in the clear green sea
Alliolyle lies not alone,
But clasped with Lallerie.

He blows on his shell plaintive notes ;
Ape, parraquito, bee
Flock where a shoe on the salt wave floats,—
The shoe of Lallerie.

He fetches nightcaps, one and nine,
Grey apes he dowers three,
His house as fair as the Malmsey wine
Seems sad as cypress tree.

Three bowls he brims with sweet honeycomb
To feast the bumble bees,
Saying, " O bees, be this your home,
For grief is on the seas ! "

He sate him lone in a coral grot,
At the flowing in of the tide ;
When ebb'd the billow, there was not,
Save coral, aught beside.

So hairy apes in three white beds,
And nightcaps, one and nine,
On moonlit pillows lay three heads
Bemused with dwarfish wine.

A tomb of coral, the dirge of bee,
The grey apes' guttural groan
For Alliolye, for Lallerie,
For thee, O Muziomone !

I MET AT EVE

WALTER DE LA MARE

I MET at eve the Prince of Sleep,
His was a still and lovely face,
He wandered through a valley steep,
Lovely in a lonely place.

His garb was grey of lavender,
About his brows a poppy-wreath
Burned like dim coals, and everywhere
The air was sweeter for his breath.

His twilight feet no sandals wore,
His eyes shone faint in their own flame,
Fair moths that gloomed his steps before
Seemed letters of his lovely name.

His house is in the mountain ways,
A phantom house of misty walls,
Whose golden flocks at evening graze,
And witch the moon with muffled calls.

Upwelling from his shadowy springs
Sweet waters shake a trembling sound,
There flit the hoot-owl's silent wings,
There hath his web the silkworm wound.

Dark in his pools clear visions lurk,
And rosy, as with morning buds,
Along his dales of broom and birk
Dreams haunt his solitary woods.

I met at eve the Prince of Sleep,
His was a still and lovely face,
He wandered through a valley steep,
Lovely in a lonely place.

ARABIA

WALTER DE LA MARE

FAR are the shades of Arabia,
Where the Princes ride at noon,
'Mid the verdurous vales and thickets,
Under the ghost of the moon ;
And so dark is that vaulted purple
Flowers in the forest rise
And toss into blossom 'gainst the phantom stars
Pale in the noonday skies.

Sweet is the music of Arabia
In my heart, when out of dreams
I still in the thin clear mirk of dawn
Descry her gliding streams ;
Hear her strange lutes on the green banks
Ring loud with the grief and delight
Of the dim-silked, dark-haired Musicians
In the brooding silence of night.

They haunt me—her lutes and her forests ;
No beauty on earth I see
But shadowed with that dream recalls
Her loveliness to me :
Still eyes look coldly upon me,
Cold voices whisper and say—
“ He is crazed with the spell of far Arabia,
They have stolen his wits away.”

SUPPOSE

WALTER DE LA MARE

SUPPOSE . . . and suppose that a wild little Horse
of Magic

Came cantering out of the sky,
With bridle of silver, and into the saddle I mounted,
To fly—and to fly ;

And we stretched up into the air, fleeting on in the
sunshine,

A speck in the gleam,
On galloping hoofs, his mane in the wind out-flowing,
In a shadowy stream ;

And oh, when, all lone, the gentle star of evening
Came crinkling into the blue,
A magical castle we saw in the air, like a cloud of
moonlight,
As onward we flew ;

And across the green moat on the drawbridge we
foamed and we snorted,

And there was a beautiful Queen
Who smiled at me strangely ; and spoke to my wild
little Horse, too—
A lovely and beautiful Queen ;

And she cried with delight—and delight—to her
delicate maidens,

“ Behold my daughter—my dear ! ”
And they crowned me with flowers, and then to
their harps sate playing,
Solemn and clear ;

And magical cakes and goblets were spread on the
table ;

And at window the birds came in ;
Hopping along with bright eyes, pecking crumbs
from the platters,
And sipped of the wine ;

And splashing up—up to the roof tossed fountains
of crystal ;

And Princes in scarlet and green
Shot with their bows and arrows, and kneeled with
their dishes
Of fruits for the Queen ;

And we walked in a magical garden with rivers and
bowers,

And my bed was of ivory and gold ;
And the Queen breathed soft in my ear a song of
enchantment—
And I never grew old. . . .

And I never, never came back to the earth, oh, never
and never ;

How mother would cry and cry !
There'd be snow on the fields then, and all these
sweet flowers in the winter
Would wither, and die. . . .

Suppose . . . and suppose . . .

BIRDS

GEOFFREY DEARMER

EAGLES, you browless birds, who skim
The sky on poised and feathered limb,
You whom no sky's top terrifies,
Taught me the terror of the skies.

Cold cormorants, your spray-wet sheen,
Your cold bead eyes of glassy green,
And bubbling death-dive, swift and steep,
Taught me the terror of the deep.

Red-eyed, red-clawed, you vultures keen,
Who find no carrion flesh unclean,
Who gather and cry at life's last breath,
Taught me the sanctity of death.

You whistling swans, your flapping flight,
A huge-formed arrow head of white
Over and down the horizon's dip,
Taught me the law of leadership.

You downy-eiders, from your breasts
Plucking the down to build your nests,
Taught me, as no commandment could,
The sacrifice of motherhood.

And you, live-crested cockatoos,
Grave toucans, hornbills, and hoopoes ,
Huge-billed, fixed-faced, preposterous birds,
Taught me God's wit, surpassing words.

THE SPHINX

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

I GAZE across the Nile ; flamelike and red
The sun goes down, and all the western sky
Is drowned in sombre crimson ; wearily
A great bird flaps along with wings of lead,
Black on the rose-red river. Over my head
The sky is hard green bronze, beneath me lie
The sleeping ships ; there is no sound, or sigh
Of the wind's breath,—a stillness of the dead.

Over a palm tree's top I see the peaks
Of the tall pyramids ; and though my eyes
Are barred from it, I know that on the sand
Crouches a thing of stone that in some wise
Broods on my heart ; and from the darkening land
Creeps Fear and to my soul in whisper speaks.

TO MY SON

(Aged sixteen)

JOHN DRINKWATER

DEAR boy unborn : the son but of my dream,
 Promise of yet unrisen day,
Come, sit beside me ; let us talk, and seem
 To take such cares and courage for your way,
 As some year yet we may.

As some year yet, when you, my son to be,
 Look out on life, and turn to go,
And I, grown grey, shall wish you well, and see
 Myself imprinted as but she could know
 To make amendment so.

I see you then, your sixteen years alight
 With limbs all true and golden hair,
And you, unborn, I will, this April night,
 Tell of the faith and honour you must wear
 For love, whose light you bear.

Beauty you have ; as, mothered so, could face
 Or limbs or hair be otherwise ?
Years gone, dear boy, there was a virgin grace
 Worth Homer's laurel under western skies
 To wander and devise.

Beauty you have. Cherish it as divine,
Wash it with dewes of diligence,
Not vainly, but because it is the sign
Of inward light, the spirit's excellence
Made visible to sense.

Athlete be you ; strong runner to the goal,
Glad though the game be lost or won : \
Fleet limbs that chronicle a fleeter soul,
In every winter valiantly to run,
Till the last race be done.

Love wisdom that is suited in a rhyme,
And be in all your learning known
Old minstrels chanting out of faded time,
Since he who counts all years gone by alone
Makes any year his own.

And when one day you are a lover too,
Come back to her who bore you, dear,
Tell out your tale ; you shall the better woo
For every word that from her lips you hear,
For she made love most clear.

Most clear for him who sits beside you now ;
There was a certain frost that fell
Before its time upon a summer bough,—
And how at last that reckoning was well,
She for your love shall tell.

Labour to build your house, but ever keep
That greater garden fresh in mind,
That England with its bird-song buried deep
In cool great woods where chivalry can find
The province of its kind.

Be great or little your inheritance,
Know there shall number in that dower
No treasure from the treasuries of chance
So rare as that you came the perfect flower
Of love's most perfect hour.

Go now, my son. Be all I might have been.
(Ask her. She knows, and none but she.)
Her beauty and her wisdom weathered clean
Some part of me in you, that you might be
Her own eternity.

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI*

T. S. ELIOT

“ A COLD coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey :
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.”
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices :
A hard time we had of it.

At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation ;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the
darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,

* Slightly abridged.

And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the
 lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place ; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This : were we led all that way for
Birth or Death ? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth
 and death,
But had thought they were different ; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

SAY NOT THAT BEAUTY

ROBIN FLOWER

SAY not that beauty is an idle thing
And gathered lightly as a wayside flower
That on the trembling verges of the spring
Knows but the sweet survival of an hour.
For 'tis not so. Through dedicated days
And foiled adventure of deliberate nights
We lose and find and stumble in the ways
That lead to the far confluence of delights.
Not with the earthly eye and fleshly ear,
But lifted far above mortality,
We see at last the eternal hills, and hear
The sighing of the universal sea ;
And kneeling breathless in the holy place
We know immortal Beauty face to face.

THE MACHINE

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

SINCE Thursday he'd been working overtime,
With only three short hours for food and sleep,
When no sleep came because of the dull beat
Of his fagged brain, and he could scarcely eat.
And now on Saturday when he was free,
And all his fellows hurried home to tea,
He was so dazed that he could hardly keep
His hands from going through the pantomime
Of keeping even sheets in his machine—
The sleek machine that day and night,
Fed with paper virgin white,
Through those glaring, flaring hours
In the incandescent light
Printed children's picture-books—
Red and yellow, blue and green,
With funny fields and running brooks,
Ships at sea and golden sands,
Queer white towns in Eastern lands,
Tossing palms on coral strands—
Until at times the clank and whirr and click,
And the shimmer of white paper turned him sick ;
And though at first the colours made him glad,
They soon were dancing in his brain like mad,
And kept on flaring through his burning head—
Now in a flash the workshop flaming red,
Now blazing green, now staring blue,
And then the yellow glow too well he knew—

Until the sleek machine with roar and glare
Began to take him in a dazzling snare,
When, fascinated, with a senseless stare
He felt himself drawn towards it till his hair
Was caught betwixt the rollers ; but his hand,
Almost before his brain could understand,
Had clutched the lever and the wheels were stopped
Just in the nick of time, though now he dropped
Half-senseless on the littered workshop floor ;
And he'd lain dazed a minute there or more
When his machine-girl helped him to a seat.
But soon again he was upon his feet
And tending that unsatisfied machine,
And printing pictures red and blue and green,
Until again the green and blue and red
Went jiggling in a riot through his head ;
And wildest of the raging rout
The blinding, screeching, racking yellow,
A crazy devil of a fellow,
Over all the others seemed to shout.
For hands must not be idle when the year
Is getting through and Christmas drawing near,
With piles on piles of picture-books to print
For people who spend money without stint,
And while they're paying down their liberal gold
Guess little what is bought and what is sold.

But he at last was free till Monday, free
To sleep, to eat, to dream, to sulk, to walk,
To laugh, to sing, to whistle, or to talk. . . .
If only through his brain unceasingly
The wheels would not keep whirring, while the
smell—

The oily smell of thick and sticky glaze—
Clung to his nostrils till 'twas hard to tell
If he were really out in the fresh air ;
And still before his eyes the blind white glare,

And then the colours dancing in his head,
A maddening maze of yellow, blue, and red.
So on he wandered in a kind of daze,
Too racked with sleeplessness to think of bed
Save as a hell where you must toss and toss,
With colours shooting in insane criss-cross
Before wide, prickling, gritty, sleepless eyes.

But as he walked along the darkening street,
Too tired to rest and far too spent to eat,
The swish and patter of the passing feet,
The living human murmur and keen cries,
The deep cool shadows of the coming night
Surging about the jets of clustered light,
And the fresh breathing of the rain-washed air,
Brought something of sweet healing to his mind ;
And, though he trailed along as if half-blind,
Yet often on the pavement he would stop
To gaze at goods displayed within a shop,
And wonder in a dull and lifeless way
What they had cost and who'd the price to pay.
But those two kinds of shop which as a boy
Had been to him a never-failing joy,
The bookshop and the fruitshop, he passed by
As if their colours seared his wincing eye,
For still he feared the yellow, blue, and red
Would start that devils' dancing in his head.

And soon through throngs of people, almost gay
To be let loose from work, he pushed his way ;
And ripples of their careless laughter stole
Like waves of cooling water through his soul ;
While sometimes he would lift his aching eyes
And see a child's face flushed with proud surprise,
As, gripping both its parents' hands quite tight,
It found itself in fairylands of light,
Walking with grown-up people through the night :

Then, turning, with a shudder he would see
Poor painted faces leering frightfully,
And so drop back from heaven again to hell.

And then somehow, though how he could not tell,
He found that he was walking through the throng
Quite happy with a young girl at his side—
A young girl apple-cheeked and eager-eyed ;
And her frank, friendly chatter seemed a song
To him who ne'er till now had heard life sing ;
And youth within him kindled quick and strong
As he drank in that careless chattering.
She told him how just lately she had come
From some far Northern isle to earn her bread ;
And in a stuffy office all day long
In shiny ledgers, with a splitting head,
She added dazzling figures till they danced
And tied themselves in wriggling knots and pranced
And scrambled helter-skelter o'er the page ;
And though it seemed already quite an age
Since she had left her home, from end to end
Of this big town she had not any friend :
At times she almost dreaded she'd go dumb
With not a soul to speak to—for at home
In her own Island she knew every one. . . .
No strangers there—save when the tinkers came
With pots and pans a-glinting in the sun—
You saw the tin far off like glancing flame
As all about the Island they would roam. . . .
Then, of themselves at home, there were six brothers,
Five sisters, with herself, besides the others—
Two homeless bairns whom, having lost their mothers
Her mother 'd taken in among her own. . . .
And she in all her life had hardly known
Her mother with no baby at her breast—
She'd always sing to hush them all to sleep,
And sang too for the dancing, sang to keep

The feet in time and tune, and still sang best,
Clean best of all the singers of the Isle.
And as she talked of home he saw her smile
With happy far-off gaze, and then, as though
In wonder how she'd come to chatter so
To this pale grave-eyed boy, she paused, half-shy,
And then she laughed with laughter clear and true,
And looked into his eyes and he laughed too,
And they were happy, hardly knowing why.

And now he told her of his life and how
He too had been nigh friendless until now :
And soon he talked to her about his work,
But as he spoke of it, as with a jerk
The light dropped from his eyes. He seemed to slip
Once more in the machine's relentless grip,
And hear again the clank and whirr and click,
And see the dancing colours and the glare,
Until his dizzy brain again turned sick ;
And seeing him look round with vacant air,
Fierce pity cut her to the very quick ;
And as her eyes with keen distress were filled
She touched his hand, and soon her kind touch stilled
The agony ; and so, to bring him ease,
She told more of that Isle in Northern seas
Where she was born and of the folk at home—
And how all night you heard the wash of foam. . . .
Sometimes on stormy nights against the pane
The sousing spray would rattle just like rain,
And oft the high-tides scoured the threshold clean. . . .

And as she talked he saw the sea-light glint
In her dark eyes—and then the sleek machine
Lost hold on him at last and ceased to print :
And in his eyes there sprang a kindred light
As hand in hand they wandered through the night.

RUPERT BROOKE

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

I

YOUR face was lifted to the golden sky
Ablaze beyond the black roofs of the square
As flame on flame leapt, flourishing in air
Its tumult of red stars exultantly
To the cold constellations dim and high ;
And, as we neared, the roaring ruddy flare
Kindled to gold your throat and brow and hair
Until you burned, a flame of ecstasy.

The golden head goes down into the night
Quenched in cold gloom—and yet again you stand
Beside me now with lifted face alight
As, flame to flame and fire to fire, you burn . . .
Then, recollecting, laughingly you turn
And look into my eyes and take my hand.

II

Once in my garret—you being far away
Tramping the hills and breathing upland air,
Or so I fancied—brooding in my chair,
I watched the London sunlight feeble and grey
Dapple my desk, too tired to labour more,
When looking up, I saw you standing there,
Although I'd caught no footstep on the stair,
Like sudden April at my open door.

Though now beyond earth's farthest hills you fare,
Song-crowned, immortal, sometimes it seems to me
That if I listen very quietly
Perhaps I'll hear your footstep on the stair
And see you, standing with your angel air,
Fresh from the uplands of eternity.

III

Your eyes rejoiced in colour's ecstasy,
Fulfilling even their uttermost desire,
When, over a great sunlit field afire
With windy poppies streaming like a sea
Of scarlet flame that flaunted riotously
Among green orchards of that western shire,
You gazed as though your heart could never tire
Of life's red flood in summer revelry.

And as I watched you, little thought had I
How soon beneath the dim, low-drifting sky
Your soul should wander down the darkling way
With eyes that peer a little wistfully,
Half-glad, half-sad, remembering, as they see
Lethæan poppies shrivelling ashen grey.

IV

October chestnuts showered their perishing gold
Over us as beside the stream we lay
In the Old Vicarage garden that blue day,
Talking of verse and all the manifold
Delights a little net of words may hold,
While in the sunlight water-voles at play
Dived under a trailing crimson bramble spray,
And walnuts thudded on the soft black mould.

Your soul goes down unto a darker stream
Alone, O friend, yet even in death's deep night
Your eyes may grow accustomed to the dark,
And Styx for you may have the ripple and gleam
Of your familiar river, and Charon's bark
Tarry by that old garden of your delight.

TRAVELS

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

ATLANTIC and Pacific I have sailed,
And sojourned in old cities of Cathay,
Icy Himalayas and stark Alps I've scaled,
And up great golden rivers thrust my way
Through crass, green, acrid, ominous dripping night
Of Senegambia : over the still snows
Of polar lands flushed with unfading rose
Of the rayless sun's cold, clipped, unkindling light,
Through the Grand Canyon's twilit mystery,
And over Arizona's sand and stone,
I travel the round world unceasingly,
Unresting, uncompanioned and apart—
Yet never may I pierce the dark unknown
And undiscovered country of my own heart.

THE ICE-CART

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

PERCHED on my city office stool
I watched with envy, while a cool
And lucky carter handled ice . . .
And I was wandering in a trice,
Far from the gray and grimy heat
Of that intolerable street,
O'er sapphire berg and emerald floe,
Beneath the still cold ruby glow
Of everlasting Polar night,
Bewildered by the queer half-light,
Until I stumbled, unawares,
Upon a creek where big white bears
Plunged headlong down with flourished heels,
And floundered after shining seals
Through shivering seas of blinding blue.
And as I watched them, ere I knew,
I'd stripped, and I was swimming, too,
Among the seal-pack, young and hale,
And thrusting on with threshing tail,
With twist and twirl and sudden leap
Through crackling ice and salty deep—
Diving and doubling with my kind,
Until, at last, we left behind
Those big white, blundering bulks of death,
And lay, at length, with panting breath
Upon a far untravelled floe,
Beneath a gentle drift of snow—

Snow drifting gently, fine and white,
Out of the endless Polar night,
Falling and falling evermore
Upon that far untravelled shore,
Till I was buried fathoms deep
Beneath that cold, white drifting sleep—
Sleep drifting deep,
Deep drifting sleep. . . .

The carter cracked a sudden whip :
I clutched my stool with startled grip,
Awakening to the grimy heat
Of that intolerable street.

LAMENT

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON

WE who are left, how shall we look again
Happily on the sun or feel the rain
Without remembering how they who went
Ungrudgingly and spent
Their lives for us loved, too, the sun and the rain ?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings—
But we, how shall we turn to little things
And listen to the birds and winds and streams
Made holy by their dreams,
Nor feel the heartbreak in the heart of things ?

FALLEN CITIES

GERALD GOULD

I GATHERED with a careless hand,
There where the waters night and day
Are languid in the idle bay,
A little heap of golden sand ;
And as I saw it, in my sight
Awoke a vision brief and bright,
A city in a pleasant land.

I saw no mound of earth, but fair
Turrets and domes and citadels,
With murmuring of many bells ;
The spires were white in the blue air,
And men by thousands went and came,
Rapid and restless, and like flame
Blown by their passions here and there.

With careless hand I swept away
The little mound before I knew ;
The visioned city vanished too,
And fall'n beneath my fingers lay.
Ah God ! how many hast Thou seen,
Cities that are not and have been,
By silent hill and idle bay !

DUCKS

F. W. HARVEY

I

FROM troubles of the world
I turn to ducks,
Beautiful comical things
Sleeping or curled
Their heads beneath white wings
By water cool,
Or finding curious things
To eat in various mucks
Beneath the pool,
Tails uppermost, or waddling
Sailor-like on the shores
Of ponds, or paddling
—Left ! right !—with fanlight feet
Which are for steady oars
When they (white galleys) float
Each bird a boat
Rippling at will the sweet
Wide waterway . . .
When night is fallen *you* creep
Upstairs, but drakes and dillies
Nest with pale water-stars,
Moonbeams and shadow bars,
And water-lilies :
Fearful too much to sleep
Since they've no locks
To click against the teeth
Of weasel and fox.

And warm beneath
Are eggs of cloudy green
Whence hungry rats and lean
Would stealthily suck
New life, but for the mien,
The bold ferocious mien
Of the mother-duck.

II

Yes, ducks are valiant things
On nests of twigs and straws,
And ducks are soothy things
And lovely on the lake
When that the sunlight draws
Thereon their pictures dim
In colours cool.
And when beneath the pool
They dabble, and when they swim
And make their rippling rings,
O ducks are beautiful things !

But ducks are comical things :—
As comical as you.
Quack !
They waddle round, they do.
They eat all sorts of things,
And then they quack.
By barn and stable and stack
They wander at their will,
But if you go too near
They look at you through black
Small topaz-tinted eyes
And wish you ill.
Triangular and clear
They leave their curious track

In mud at the water's edge,
And there amid the sedge
And slime they gobble and peer
Saying " Quack ! quack ! "

III

When God had finished the stars and whirl of coloured
suns
He turned His mind from big things to fashion little
ones,
Beautiful tiny things (like daisies) He made, and
then
He made the comical ones in case the minds of men
Should stiffen and become
Dull, humourless and glum,
And so forgetful of their Maker be
As to take even themselves—*quite seriously*.
Caterpillars and cats are lively and excellent puns :
All God's jokes are good—even the practical ones !
And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled
a bit
Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He
fashioned it.
And He's probably laughing still at the sound that
came out of its bill !

STUPIDITY STREET

RALPH HODGSON

I SAW with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat ;
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

POETS, PAINTERS, PUDDINGS

RICHARD HUGHES

POETS, painters, and puddings ; these three
Make up the World as it ought to be.

Poets make faces
And sudden grimaces :
They twit you, and spit you
On words : then admit you
To heaven or hell
By the tales that they tell.

Painters are gay
As young rabbits in May :
They buy jolly mugs,
Bowls, pictures, and jugs :
The things round their necks
Are lively with checks,
(For they like something red
As a frame for the head) :
Or they'll curse you with oaths,
That tear holes in your clothes.
(With nothing to mend them
You'd best not offend them.)

Puddings should be
Full of currants, for me :
Boiled in a pail,
Tied in the tail

Of an old bleached shirt :
So hot that they hurt,
So huge that they last
From the dim, distant past
Until the crack o' doom
Lift the roof off the room.

Poets, painters, and puddings ; these three
Crown the day as it crowned should be.

THE SINGING FURIES

RICHARD HUGHES

THE yellow sky grows vivid as the sun :
The sea glittering, and the hills dun.

The stones quiver. Twenty pounds of lead
Fold upon fold, the air laps my head.

Both eyes scorch : tongue stiff and bitter :
Flies buzz, but no birds twitter :
Slow bullocks stand with stinging feet,
And naked fishes scarcely stir for heat.

White as smoke,
As jetted steam, dead clouds awoke
And quivered on the Western rim.
And then the singing started : dim
And sibilant as rime-stiff reeds
That whistle as the wind leads.
The South whispered hard and sere :
The North answered, low and clear ;
And thunder muffled up like drums
Beat, whence the East wind comes.
The heavy sky that could not weep
Is loosened : rain falls steep :
And thirty singing furies ride
To split the sky from side to side.

They sing, and lash the wet-flanked wind :
Sing, from Col to Hafod Mynd,

And fling their voices half a score
Of miles along the mounded shore :
Whip loud music from a tree,
And roll their pæan out to sea
Where crowded breakers fling and leap,
And strange things throb five fathoms deep.

The sudden tempest roared and died :
The singing furies muted ride
Down wet and slippery roads to hell :
And, silent in their captors' train,
Two fishers, storm-caught on the main ;
A shepherd, battered with his flocks ;
A pit-boy tumbled from the rocks ;
A dozen back-broke gulls, and hosts
Of shadowy, small, pathetic ghosts,
—Of mice and leverets caught by flood ;
Their beauty shrouded in cold mud.

THE ORANGE

FRANK KENDON

TAKE him this charm.

Though he sits long and languidly to-night,
Wrapped in Lethean thoughtlessness,
He will awake ; his eyes will twinkle ; bright
 Will glow his cheeks ; and, warm
His lively blood will dance away distress.

Then you shall hear
Of violet, vaulted skies, and brazen days ;
And catch the whisper in the shadowy groves
Of warmly scented wind that lightly plays
 Among the oranges and near
The lapping waves of Yafa this man loves.

Then you shall see
The pale rose mosque, the white-walled dusty street,
Swart copper skin, and gleaming stalwart arm,
Bright-turbaned babes, and laughing teeth, and
 sweet
Rachels whose modesty .
Droops over tremulous eyes. . . . Take him this
 charm.

NOW TO THE WORLD

FRANK KENDON

Now to the world we'll go, my body and I,
Leaving the comfortable nights and days,
The books where wise old men in wise old ways
Wrote down their thoughts of life in years gone by.

Snap up the switch, and let the darkness down ;
Shut the two doors ; deliver up the key.
These things pass on to others ; but for me
They have grown lifeless—I must seek my own.

Picture and book, most taciturn, most dear ;
Hearth where I burned my more ambitious rhymes ;
Room where I dreamed of life a thousand times ;
Scene of so many a joy and fancied fear,

There is no break in this farewell. I go,
Eager as sailors to the uncharted sea—
To wreck or Eldorado—steadfastly ;
Whither, save hence, I do not care nor know.

Here I have laid my little-practised hand
To many a task, as children play, for learning ;
Here I have told my closest secrets, burning
With strong affection for some intimate friend.

Here we have laughed, or argued, man with man,
Till the quick double pulse of midnight sounded ;
Have mocked at Time and Death, and been con-
founded ;
Have spoken glibly of the race we ran.

And here, in silence, as the impatient morning
Hovered behind the elms, I spoke with Sorrow ;
Clung to wild prophecies of hope to-morrow ;
Prayed to I know not whom, and met day scorning

Here it was hard to lose, if only dreams ;
And here, where empty walls return my stare,
A strong imagination, passionate, clear,
Opened a window upon love, it seems :

Better than art, by trembling fingers made ;
The portrait of a queen without her crown,
A thing alive, with magic looks cast down,
And moving lips, by cunning truth portrayed . . .

Close the two doors. Deliver up the key.
There is no break in this farewell to peace—
No frown or smile to signify release—
Snap up the switch ; and let the darkness see !

FEAR

RUDYARD KIPLING

ERE Mor the Peacock flutters, ere the Monkey
People cry,
Ere Chil the Kite swoops down a furlong sheer,
Through the Jungle very softly flits a Shadow and
a sigh—
He is Fear, O Little Hunter, he is Fear !

Very softly down the glade runs a waiting, watching
shade,
And the whisper spreads and widens far and near ;
And the sweat is on thy brow, for he passes even
now—
He is Fear, O Little Hunter, he is Fear !

Ere the Moon has climbed the mountain, ere the
rocks are ribbed with light,
When the downward-dipping tails are dank and
drear ;
Comes a breathing hard behind thee, snuffle-snuffle
through the night—
It is Fear, O Little Hunter, it is Fear !

On thy knees and draw the bow, bid the shrilling
arrow go ;
In the empty mocking thicket plunge the spear ;
But thy hands are loosed and weak, and the blood
has left thy cheek—
It is Fear, O Little Hunter, it is Fear !

When the heat-cloud sucks the tempest, when the
 slivered pine trees fall,
 When the blinding, blaring rain-squalls lash and
 veer ;
Through the trumpets of the thunder rings a voice
 more loud than all—
It is Fear, O Little Hunter, it is Fear !

Now the spates are banked and deep ; now the
 footless boulders leap ;
 Now the lightning shows each littlest leaf-rib
 clear ;
But thy throat is shut and dried, and thy heart
 against thy side
Hammers : Fear, O Little Hunter—this is Fear !

ENVOI

P. H. B. LYON

EARTH puts her colours by,
And veils her in one whispering cloak of shadow ;
Green goes from the meadow ;
Red leaves and flowers and shining pools are
 shrouded ;
A few stars sail upon a windy sky,
And the moon is clouded.

The delicate music, traced
In and out of the soft lights and the laughter,
Is hushed, round ledge and rafter
The last faint echoes into silence creeping :
The harp is mute, the violins encased,
And the singers sleeping.

So, now my songs are done,
Leave me to-night awhile and the starlight gleaming,
To silence and sweet dreaming,
Here where no music calls, no beauty shakes me ;
Till in my heart the birds sing to the sun
And the new dawn wakes me.

AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG

JOHN MASEFIELD

I SAW a ship a-sailing, a-sailing, a-sailing,
With emeralds and rubies and sapphires in her hold ;
And a bosun in a blue coat bawling at the railing,
Piping through a silver call that had a chain of gold ;
The summer wind was failing and the tall ship rolled.

I saw a ship a-steering, a-steering, a-steering,
With roses in red thread worked upon her sails ;
With sacks of purple amethysts, the spoils of
buccaneering,
Skins of musky yellow wine, and silks in bales,
Her merry men were cheering, hauling on the brails.

I saw a ship a-sinking, a-sinking, a-sinking,
With glittering sea-water splashing on her decks,
With seamen in her spirit-room singing songs and
drinking,
Pulling claret bottles down, and knocking off the
necks,
The broken glass was chinking as she sank among the
wrecks.

A BALLAD OF JOHN SILVER

JOHN MASEFIELD

WE were schooner-rigged and rakish, with a long
and lissome hull,
And we flew the pretty colours of the cross-bones
and the skull ;
We'd a big black Jolly Roger flapping grimly at the
fore,
And we sailed the Spanish Water in the happy days
of yore.

We'd a long brass gun amidships, like a well-
conducted ship,
We had each a brace of pistols and a cutlass at the
hip ;
It's a point which tells against us, and a fact to be
deplored,
But we chased the goodly merchant-men and laid
their ships aboard.

Then the dead men fouled the scuppers and the
wounded filled the chains,
And the paint-work all was spatter-dashed with
other people's brains,
She was boarded, she was looted, she was scuttled
till she sank,
And the pale survivors left us by the medium of the
plank.

O ! then it was (while standing by the taffrail on the
poop)
We could hear the drowning folk lament the absent
chicken-coop ;
Then, having washed the blood away, we'd little
else to do
Than to dance a quiet hornpipe as the old salts
taught us to.

O ! the fiddle on the fo'c's'le, and the slapping naked
soles,
And the genial " Down the middle, Jake, and curtsey
when she rolls ! "
With the silver seas around us and the pale moon
overhead,
And the look-out not a-looking and his pipe-bowl
glowing red.

Ah ! the pig-tailed, quidding pirates and the pretty
pranks we played,
All have since been put a stop-to by the naughty
Board of Trade ;
The schooners and the merry crews are laid away to
rest,
A little south the sunset in the Islands of the Blest.

CARGOES

JOHN MASEFIELD

QUINQUIREME of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
 With a cargo of ivory
 And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green
 shores,
 With a cargo of diamonds,
 Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
 With a cargo of Tyne coal,
 Road rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

CHILD TO PARENTS

VIOLA MEYNELL

I AM your Colony where you have dispatched
 What your own selves could spare.
I am your portrait where you look upon
 Your eyes, your hands, your hair.
I am a book wherein you wrote a life ;
 Also your book to read.
I am a road you took knowing not where
 Its way would lead.
I am a mystery on which you dwell,
Though made of your own parts you know so well.

TREES (Extract)

HAROLD MONRO

THERE are some men, of course, some men, I know,
Who, when they pass,
Seem like trees walking, and to grow
From earth, and, native in the grass,
(So taut their muscles) move on gliding roots.
They blossom every day : their fruits
Are always new and cover the happy ground.
Wherever they may stand
You hear inevitable sound
Of birds and branches, harvest and all delights
Of pastured and wooded land.
For them it is not dangerous to go
Each side that barrier moving to and fro :
They without trepidation undertake
Excursions into sleep, and safely come awake.

But it is different, different for me,
(Also for you I fear)
To whom a tree seems something more than tree,
And when we see,
Clustered together, two or three,
We almost are afraid to pass them near.
How beautifully they grow,
Above their stiles and lanes and watery places,
Crowding the brink of silence everywhere,
With branches dipping low
To smile toward us or to stroke our faces.

They drown us in their summer, and swirl round,
Leaving us faint : so nobody is free,
But always some surrounding ground
Is swamped and washed and covered in by tree.

They follow us and haunt us. We must build
Houses of wood. Our evening rooms are filled
With fragments of the forest : chairs and tables.
We swing our wooden doors ;
Pile up, divide our sheds, byres, stables
With logs, make wooden stairs, lay wooden floors.
Sit, move, and sleep among the limbs of trees,
Rejoicing to be near them. How men saw,
Chisel and hammer, carve and tease
All timber to their purpose, modelling
The forest in their chambers. And the raw
Wild stuff, built like a cupboard or a shelf,
Will crack and shiver in the night, and sing,
Reminding everybody of itself ;
Out of decayed old centuries will bring
A sudden memory
Of growing tree.

RUMOUR

HAROLD MONRO

SOMEBODY is whispering on the stair.
What are those words half-spoken, half-drawn back ?
What are those muffled words, some red, some black ?
Who is whispering ? Who is there ?

Somebody is sneaking up the stair
With feet approaching every doorway,
Yet never a moment standing anywhere.

Now they are whispering close outside some door.
Or suddenly push it open wide—
You see : whoever said he heard them, he has lied.

And yet words are left dark like heavy dust
In many rooms, or red like rust ;
And who contrives to leave them ? Some one must.

In every street, this noisy town of ours
Has stealthy whispering watchers walking round,
Recording all our movements, every sound,
Hissing and shuffling, and they may have found
To-day my name : to-morrow they'll find yours.

THE GAZELLES

T. STURGE MOORE

WHEN the sheen on tall summer grass is pale,
Across blue skies white clouds float on
In shoals, or disperse and singly sail,
Till, the sun being set, they all are gone :

Yet, as long as they may shine bright in the sun,
They flock or stray through the daylight bland,
While their stealthy shadows like foxes run
Beneath where the grass is dry and tanned :

And the waste, in hills that swell and fall,
Goes heaving into yet dreamier haze ;
And a wonder of silence is over all
Where the eye feeds long like a lover's gaze :

Then, cleaving the grass, gazelles appear
(The gentler dolphins of kindlier waves)
With sensitive heads alert of ear ;
Frail crowds that a delicate hearing saves,

That rely on the nostrils' keenest power,
And are governed from trance-like distances
By hopes and fears, and, hour by hour,
Sagacious of safety, snuff the breeze.

They keep together, the timid hearts ;
And each one's fear with a panic thrill
Is passed to an hundred ; and if one starts
In three seconds all are over the hill.

A Nimrod might watch, in his hall's wan space,
After the feast, on the moonlit floor,
The timorous mice that troop and race,
As tranced o'er those herds the sun doth pour ;

Like a wearied tyrant sated with food
Who envies each tiniest thief that steals
Its hour from his abstracted mood,
For it living zest and beauty reveals.

He alone, save the quite dispassionate moon,
Sees them ; she stares at the prowling pard
Who surprises their sleep and, ah ! how soon
Is riding the weakest or sleepest hard !

Let an agony's nightmare course begin,
Four feet with five spurs a piece control,
Like a horse thief reduced to save his skin,
Or a devil that rides a human soul !

The race is as long as recorded time,
Yet brief as the flash of assassin's knife ;
For 'tis crammed as history is with crime
'Twixt the throbs at taking and losing life ;

Then the warm wet clutch on the nape of the neck,
Through which the keen incisors drive ;
Then the fleet knees give, down drops the wreck
Of yesterday's pet that was so alive.

Yet the moon is naught concerned, ah no !
She shines as on a drifting plank
Far in some northern sea-stream's flow
From which two numbed hands loosened and sank.

Such thinning their number must suffer ; and worse
When hither at times the Shah's children roam,
Their infant listlessness to immerse
In energy's ancient upland home :

For here the shepherd in years of old
Was taught by the stars, and bred a race
That welling forth from these highlands rolled
In tides of conquest o'er earth's face :

On piebald ponies or else milk-white,
Here, with green bridles in silver bound,
A crescent moon on the violet night
Of their saddle cloths, or a sun rayed round,—

With tiny bells on their harness ringing,
And voices that laugh and are shrill by starts,
Prancing, curvetting, and with them bringing
Swift chetahs cooped up in light-wheeled carts,

They come, and their dainty pavilions pitch
In some valley, beside a sinuous pool,
Where a grove of cedars towers in which
Hérons have built, where the shade is cool ;

Where they tether their ponies to low hung boughs,
Where long through the night their red fires gleam,
Where the morning's stir doth them arouse
To their bath in the lake, as from dreams to a dream.

And thence in an hour their hunt rides forth,
And the chetahs course the shy gazelle
To the east or west or south or north,
And every eve in a distant vale

A hecatomb of the slaughtered beasts
Is piled ; tongues loll from breathless throats ;
Round large jet eyes the horsefly feasts—
Jet eyes, which now a blue film coats :

Dead there they bleed, and each prince there
Is met by his sister, wife, or bride—
Delicious ladies with long dark hair,
And soft dark eyes, and brows arched wide,

In quilted jacket, embroidered sash,
And tent-like skirts of pleated lawn ;
While their silk-lined jewelled slippers flash
Round bare feet bedded like pools at dawn :

So choicefully prepared to please,
Young, female, royal of race and mood,
In indolent compassion these
O'er those dead beauteous creatures brood :

They lean some minutes against their friend,
A lad not slow to praise himself,
Who tells how this one met his end
Out-raced, or trapped by leopard stealth,

And boasts his chetahs fleetest are :
Through his advice the chance occurred,
That leeward vale by which the car
Was well brought round to head the herd.

Seeing him bronzed by sun and wind,
She feels his power and owns him lord,
Then, that his courage may please her mind,
With a soft coy hand half draws his sword,

Just shudders to see the cold steel gleam,
And drops it back in the long curved sheath ;
She will make his evening meal a dream
And surround his sleep like some rich wreath

Of heavy-lidded flowers bewitched
To speak soft words of ecstasy
To wizard king old, wise, and enriched
With all save youth's and love's sweet glee.

But, while they sleep, the orphaned herd
And wounded stragglers, through the night
Wander in pain, and wail unheard
To the moon and the stars so cruelly bright :

Why are they born ? ah ! why beget
They in the long November gloom
Heirs of their beauty, their fleetness,—yet
Heirs of their panics, their pangs, their doom ?

That to princely spouses children are born
To be daintily bred and taught to please,
Has a fitness like the return of morn :
But why perpetuate lives like these ?

Why, with horns that jar and with fiery eyes,
Should the male stags fight for the shuddering does
Through the drear dark nights, with frequent cries
From tyrant lust or outlawed woes ?

Doth the meaningless beauty of their lives
Rave in the spring, when they course afar
Like the shadows of birds, and the young fawn
 strives
Till its parents no longer the fleetest are ?

Like the shadows of flames which the sun's rays
 throw
On a kiln's blank wall, where glaziers dwell,
Pale shadows as those from glasses they blow,
Yet that lap at the blank wall and rebel,—

Even so to my curious trance-like thought
Those herds move over those pallid hills,
With fever as of a frail life caught
In circumstance o'er-charged with ills ;

More like the shadow of lives than life,
Or most like the life that is never born
From baffled purpose and foredoomed strife,
That in each man's heart must be hidden from scorn

Yet with something of beauty very rare
Unseizable, fugitive, half-discerned ;
The trace of intentions that might have been fair
In action, left on a face that yearned

But long has ceased to yearn, alas !
So faint a trace do they leave on the slopes
Of hills as sleek as their coats with grass :
So faint may the trace be of noblest hopes.

Yet why are they born to roam and die ?
Can their beauty answer thy query, O soul ?
Nay, nor that of hopes which were born to fly,
But whose pinions the common and coarse day stol

Like that region of grassy hills outspread,
A realm of our thoughts knows days and nights
And summers and winters, and has fed
Ineffectual herds of vanished delights.

THE DEED

T. STURGE MOORE

No sight earth yields our eyes is lovelier than
The body of a naked strong young man.
O watch him course the meadows flecked with shade
Beside a stream, before his plunge be made !
Then watch him ridge the water to its brims
With rhythmic measure while he gravely swims ;
And watch him issue, shining even more,
Run, leap and prove himself upon the shore,
Intent to warm his limbs and have them dry,
Making great efforts, seeming as he would fly.
Ah ! he can fill an hour up in this way
And never hear a voice within him say,
“ Why art thou not at work ? ” for it is true
That all he is approves what he doth do.

ROWER'S CHANT

T. STURGE MOORE

Row till the land dip 'neath
The sea from view.
Row till a land peep up,
A home for you.

Row till the mast sing songs
Welcome and sweet.
Row till the waves, outstripped,
Give up dead beat.

Row till the sea-nymphs rise
To ask you why
Rowing you tarry not
To hear them sigh.

Row till the stars grow bright
Like certain eyes.
Row till the noon be high
As hopes you prize.

Row till you harbour in
All longing's port.
Row till you find all things
For which you sought.

FELIX ANTONIUS

HENRY NEWBOLT

TO-DAY my friend is seventy-five,
He tells his tale with no regret,
His brave old eyes are steadfast yet,
His heart the lightest heart alive.

He sees behind him green and wide
The pathway of his pilgrim years :
He sees the shore and dreadless hears
The whisper of the creeping tide.

For out of all his days not one
Has passed and left its unlaid ghost
To seek a light for ever lost,
Or wait a deed for ever done.

So for reward of lifelong truth
He lives again as good men can,
Redoubling his allotted span
With memories of a stainless youth.

NIGHT RHAPSODY

ROBERT NICHOLS

How beautiful it is to wake at night,
When over all there reigns the ultimate spell
Of complete silence, darkness absolute,
To feel the world, tilted on axle-tree,
In slow gyration, with no sensible sound,
Unless to ears of unimagined beings,
Resident incorporeal or stretched
In vigilance of ecstasy among
Ethereal paths and the celestial maze.
The rumour of our onward course now brings
A steady rustle, as of some strange ship
Darkling with soundless sail all set and amply filled
By volume of an ever-constant air,
At fullest night, through seas for ever calm,
Swept lovely and unknown for ever on.

How beautiful it is to wake at night,
Embalmed in darkness watchful, sweet, and still,
As is the brain's mood flattered by the swim
Of currents circumvolvent in the void,
To lie quite still and to become aware
Of the dim light cast by nocturnal skies
On a dim earth beyond the window-ledge,
So, isolate from the friendly company
Of the huge universe which turns without,
To brood apart in calm and joy awhile
Until the spirit sinks and scarcely knows
Whether self is, or if self only is,
For ever. . . .

How beautiful to wake at night,
Within the room grown strange, and still, and sweet,
And live a century while in the dark
The dripping wheel of silence slowly turns ;
To watch the window open on the night,
A dewy silent deep where nothing stirs,
And, lying thus, to feel dilate within
The press, the conflict, and the heavy pulse
Of incommunicable sad ecstasy,
Growing until the body seems outstretched
In perfect crucifixion on the arms
Of a cross pointing from last void to void,
While the heart dies to a mere midway spark.

All happiness thou holdest, happy night,
For such as lie awake and feel dissolved
The peaceful spice of darkness and the cool
Breath hither blown from the ethereal flowers
That mist thy fields ! O happy, happy wounds,
Conditioned by existence in humanity,
That have such powers to heal them ! slow sweet
sighs

Torn from the bosom, silent wails, the birth
Of such long-treasured tears as pain his eyes,
Who, waking, hears the divine solitudes
Of midnight with ineffable purport charged.

How beautiful it is to wake at night,
Another night, in darkness yet more still,
Save when the myriad leaves on full-fledged boughs,
Filled rather by the perfume's wandering flood
Than by dispansion of the still sweet air,
Shall from the furthest utter silences
In glimmering secrecy have gathered up
An host of whisperings and scattered sighs,
To loose at last a sound as of the plunge
And lapsing seethe of some Pacific wave,

Which, risen from the star-thronged outer troughs,
Rolls in to wreathe with circling foam away
The flutter of the golden moths that haunt
The star's one glimmer daggered on wet sands.

So beautiful it is to wake at night !
Imagination, loudening with the surf
Of the midsummer wind among the boughs,
Gathers my spirit from the haunts remote
Of faintest silence and the shades of sleep,
To bear me on the summit of her wave
Beyond known shores, beyond the mortal edge
Of thought terrestrial, to hold me poised
Above the frontiers of infinity,
To which in the full reflux of the wave
Come soon I must, bubble of solving foam,
Borne to those other shores—now never mine
Save for a hovering instant, short as this
Which now sustains me ere I be drawn back—
To learn again, and wholly learn, I trust,
How beautiful it is to wake at night.

FULFILMENT

ROBERT NICHOLS

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? Grief yet is mine.
Other loves I have, men rough, but men who stir
More grief, more joy, than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun ;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
As whose children we are brethren : one.

And any moment may descend hot death
To shatter limbs ! pulp, tear, blast
Beloved soldiers who love rough life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimed face turned bony,
Oped mouth gushing, fallen head,
Lessening pressure of a hand shrunk, clammed, and
 stony !
O sudden spasm, release of the dead !

Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once ? Grief yet is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all, my joy, my grief, my love, are thine !

WHEN ALL IS SAID

J. D. C. PELLOW

WHEN all is said
And all is done
Beneath the Sun,
And Man lies dead ;

When all the earth
Is a cold grave,
And no more brave,
Bright things have birth ;

When cooling sun
And stone-cold world,
Together hurled,
Flame up as one—

O Sons of Men,
When all is flame,
What of your fame
And splendour then ?

When all is fire
And flaming air,
What of your rare
And high desire

To turn the clod
To a thing divine,
The earth a shrine,
And Man the God ?

A FRUIT PIECE

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

THE rust-red apricot and golden pear
Make harmony with peach and nectarine,
Dim earthy medlars and the purple shine
Of mulberry and plum, while, amber clear,
Ripe muscats bosom dewy from the vine,
By blushing, white-heart cherries debonair.
Now netted melon and paunchy pine,
Wearing his jade aigrette, and mangoes rare,
Rasp, custard-apple, loquat, mangosteen,
The strawberry, granadilla, pomegranate,
With amethyst jewels for a fairy queen,
Red orange, fig, banana, sugary date—
Summon them all, and in your rainbow set
A tamarin—the tiniest marmozet.

TUSCANY

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

CISTERNs and stones ; the fig tree in the wall
Casts down her shadow, ashen as her boughs,
Across the road, across the thick white dust.
Down from the hill the slow white oxen crawl,
Dragging the purple wagon heaped with must,
With scarlet tassels on their milky brows,
Gentle as evening moths. Beneath the yoke
Lounging against the shaft they fitful strain
To draw the wagon on its creaking spoke,
And all the vineyard folk
With staves and shouldered tools surround the wain.
The wooden shovels take the purple stain,
The dusk is heavy with the wine's warm load ;
Here the long sense of classic measure cures
The spirit weary of its difficult pain ;
Here the old Bacchic piety endures,
Here the sweet legends of the world remain.
Homeric wagons lumbering the road ;
Virgilian litanies among the bine ;
Pastoral sloth of flocks beneath the pine ;
The swineherd watching, propped upon his goad,
Under the chestnut trees the rootling swine—
Who could so stand, and see this evening fall,
This calm of husbandry, this redolent tilth,
This terracing of hills, this vintage wealth,
Without the pagan sanity of blood
Mounting his veins in young and tempered health ?

Who could so stand, and watch processional
The vintners, herds, and flocks in dusty train
Wend through the golden evening to regain
The terraced farm and trodden threshing-floor
Where late the flail
Tossed high the maize in scud of gritty ore,
And lies half-buried in the heap of grain—
Who could so watch, and not forget the rack
Of wills worn thin and thought become too frail,
Nor roll the centuries back
And feel the sinews of his soul grow hale,
And know himself for Rome's inheritor ?

BEE-MASTER

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

I HAVE known honey from the Syrian hills
Stored in cool jars ; the wild acacia there
On the rough terrace where the locust shrills
Tosses her spindrift on the ringing air.
Narcissus bares his nectarous perianth
In white and golden tabard to the sun,
And while the workers rob the amaranth
Or scarlet windflower low among the stone,
Intent upon their crops,
The Syrian queens mate in the high hot day
Rapt visionaries of creative fray ;
Soaring from fecund ecstasy alone,
And, through the blazing ether, drops
Like a small thunderbolt the vindicated drone.

But this is the bee-master's reckoning
In England. Walk among the hives and hear.

Forget not bees in winter, though they sleep.
For winter's big with summer in her womb,
And when you plant your rose-trees, plant them deep,
Having regard to bushes all aflame,
And see the dusky promise of their bloom
In small red shoots, and let each redolent name—
Tuscany, Crested Cabbage, Cottage Maid—
Load with full June November's dank repose,
See the kind cattle drowsing in the shade,
And hear the bee about his amorous trade
Brown in the gipsy crimson of the rose.

In February, if the days be clear,
The waking bee, still drowsy on the wing,
Will sense the opening of another year
And blunder out to seek another spring.
Crashing through winter sunlight's pallid gold
His clumsiness sets catkins on the willow
Ashake like lambs' tails in the early fold,
Dusting with pollen all his brown and yellow,
But when the rimy afternoon turns cold
And undern squalls buffet the chilly fellow,
He'll seek the hive's warm waxen welcoming
And set about the chambers' classic mould.

And then, pell-mell, his harvest follows swift,
Blossom and borage, lime and balm and clover,
On Downs the thyme, on cliffs the scantling thrift,
Everywhere bees go racing with the hours,
For every bee becomes a drunken lover,
Standing upon his head to sup the flowers,
All over England, from Northumbrian coasts,
To the wild sea-pink blown on Devon rocks.
Over the merry southern gardens, over
The grey-green bean-fields, round the Sussex oasts,
Through the frilled spires of cottage hollyhocks,
Go the big brown fat bees, and blunder in
Where dusty spears of sunlight cleave the barn,
And seek the sun again, and storm the whin,
And in the warm meridian solitude
Hum in the heather round the moorland tarn.

Look, too, when summer hatches out the brood,
In tardy May or early June,
And the young queens are strong in the cocoon,
Watch, if the days be warm,
The flitting of the swarm.
Follow, for if beyond your sight they stray
Your bees are lost, and you must take your way

Homeward disconsolate, but if you be at hand
Then you may take your bees on strangers' land.
Have your skep ready, drowse them with your smoke,
Whether they cluster on the handy bough
Or in the difficult hedge, be nimble now,
For bees are captious folk
And quick to turn against the lubber's touch,
But if you shake them to their wicker hutch
Firmly, and turn towards the hive your skep,
Into the hive the clustered thousands stream,
Mounting the little slatted sloping step,
A ready colony, queen, workers, drones,
Patient to build again the waxen thrones
For younger queens, and all the chambered cells
For lesser brood, and all the immemorial scheme.

And still they labour, though the hand of man
Inscrutable and ravaging descend,
Pillaging in their citadels,
Defeating wantonly their provident plan,
Making a havoc of their patient hoard ;
Still start afresh, not knowing to what end,
Not knowing to what ultimate reward,
Or what new ruin of the garnered hive
The senseless god in man will send.
Still their blind stupid industry will strive,
Constructing for destruction pitiably,
That still their unintelligible lord
May reap his wealth from their calamity.

FULL MOON

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

SHE was wearing the coral taffeta trousers
Some one had brought her from Ispahan,
And the little gold coat with pomegranate blossoms,
And the coral-hafted feather fan ;
But she ran down a Kentish lane in the moonlight,
And skipped in the pool of the moon as she ran.

She cared not a rap for all the big planets,
For Betelgeuse or Aldebaran,
And all the big planets cared nothing for her,
That small impertinent charlatan ;
But she climbed on a Kentish stile in the moonlight,
And laughed at the sky through the sticks of her fan.

STRANGENESS OF HEART

SIEGFRIED SASOON

WHEN I have lost the power to feel the pang
Which first I felt in childhood when I woke
And heard the unheeding garden bird who sang
Strangeness of heart for me while morning broke ;
Or when in latening twilight sure with spring,
Pausing on homeward paths along the wood,
No sadness thrills my thought while thrushes sing,
And I'm no more the listening child who stood
So many sunsets past and could not say
What wandering voices called from far away :
 When I have lost simple spells that stirred
 My being with an untranslated song,
 Let me go home for ever ; I shall have heard
 Death ; I shall know that I have lived too long.

EARLY CHRONOLOGY

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

SLOWLY the daylight left our listening faces.

Professor Brown with level baritone
Discoursed into the dusk.

Five thousand years
He guided us through scientific spaces
Of excavated History ; till the lone
Roads of research grew blurred ; and in our ears
Time was the rumoured tongues of vanished races,
And thought a chartless Age of Ice and Stone.

The story ended. Then the darkened air
Flowered as he lit his pipe ; an aureole glowed
Enwreathed with smoke ; the moment's match-light
showed

His rosy face, broad brow, and smooth grey hair,
Backed by the crowded book-shelves.

In his wake
An archæologist began to make
Assumptions about aqueducts (he quoted
Professor Sandstorm's book) ; and soon they floated
Through desiccated forests ; mangled myths ;
And argued easily round megaliths.

Beyond the college garden something glinted ;
A copper moon climbed clear above the trees.
Some Lydian coin ? . . . Professor Brown agrees
That copper coin *were* in that culture minted ;
But, as her whitening way aloft she took,
I thought she had a pre-dynastic look.

GRANDEUR OF GHOSTS

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

WHEN I have heard small talk about great men
I climb to bed ; light my two candles ; then
Consider what was said ; and put aside
What Such-a-one remarked and Someone-else re-
plied.

They have spoken lightly of my deathless friends,
(Lamps for my gloom, hands guiding where I stumble,)
Quoting, for shallow conversational ends,
What Shelley shrilled, what Blake once wildly
muttered . . .

How can they use such names and be not humble ?
I have sat silent ; angry at what they uttered.
The dead bequeathed them life ; the dead have said
What these can only memorize and mumble.

DREAMERS

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

SOLDIERS are citizens of death's grey land,
Drawing no dividend from time's to-morrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.

Soldiers are sworn to action ; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers ; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

SONGBOOKS OF THE WAR

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

IN fifty years, when peace outshines
Remembrance of the battle lines,
Adventurous lads will sigh and cast
Proud looks upon the plundered past.
On summer morn or winter's night,
Their hearts will kindle for the fight,
Reading a snatch of soldier-song,
Savage and jaunty, fierce and strong ;
And through the angry marching rhymes
Of blind regret and haggard mirth,
They'll envy us the dazzling times
When sacrifice absolved our earth.

Some ancient man with silver locks
Will lift his weary face to say :
" War was a fiend who stopped our clocks,
Although we met him grim and gay."
And then he'll speak of Haig's last drive,
Marvelling that any came alive
Out of the shambles that men built
And smashed, to cleanse the world of guilt.
But the boys, with grin and sidelong glance,
Will think, " Poor grandad's day is done."
And dream of those who fought in France
And lived in time to share the fun.

EVERYONE SANG

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

EVERYONE suddenly burst out singing ;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields ; on—on—and out
of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted ;
And beauty came like the setting sun :
My heart was shaken with tears ; and horror
Drifted away . . . O, but Everyone
Was a bird ; and the song was wordless ; the singing
will never be done.

THE STORM

EDWARD SHANKS

WE wake to hear the storm come down,
Sudden on roof and pane ;
The thunder's loud and the hasty wind
Hurries the beating rain.

The rain slackens, the wind blows gently,
The gust grows gentle and stills,
And the thunder, like a breaking stick,
Stumbles about the hills.

The drops still hang on leaf and thorn,
The downs stand up more green ;
The sun comes out again in power
And the sky is washed and clean.

THE SWIMMERS

EDWARD SHANKS

THE cove's a shining plate of blue and green,
With darker belts between
The trough and crest of the slow-rising swell,
And the great rocks throw purple shadows down,
Where transient sun-sparks wink and burst and
drown
And glimmering pebbles lie too deep to tell,
Hidden or shining as the shadow wavers.
And everywhere the restless sun-steeped air
Trembles and quavers,
As though it were
More saturate with light than it could bear.

Now come the swimmers from slow-dripping caves,
Where the shy fern creeps under the veined roof,
And wading out meet with glad breast the waves.
One holds aloof,
Climbing alone the reef with shrinking feet,
That scarce endure the jagged stones' dull beat,
Till on the edge he poises
And flies to cleave the water, vanishing
In wreaths of white, with echoing liquid noises,
And swims beneath, a vague, distorted thing.
Now all the other swimmers leave behind
The crystal shallow and the foam-wet shore,
And sliding into deeper water find

A living coolness in the lifting flood,
And through their bodies leaps the sparkling blood,
So that they feel the faint earth's drought no more.
There now they float, heads raised above the green,
White bodies cloudily seen,
Farther and farther from the brazen rock,
On which the hot air shakes, on which the tide
Fruitlessly throws with gentle, soundless shock
The cool and lagging wave. Out, out they go,
And now upon a mirrored cloud they ride
Or turning over, with soft strokes and slow,
Slide on like shadows in a tranquil sky.
Behind them, on the tall, parched cliff, the dry
And dusty grasses grow
In shallow ledges of the arid stone,
Starving for coolness and the touch of rain.
But, though to earth they must return again,
Here come the soft sea-air to meet them, blown
Over the surface of the outer deep,
Scarce moving, staying, falling, straying, gone,
Light and delightful as the touch of sleep . . .
One wakes and splashes round,
And, as by magic, all the others wake
From that sea-dream, and now with rippling sound
Their rapid arms the enchanted silence break.
And now again the crystal shallows take
The gleaming bodies whose cool hour is done ;
They pause upon the beach, they pause and sigh
Then vanish in the caverns one by one.

Soon the wet foot-marks on the stones are dry :
The cove sleeps on beneath the unwavering sun.

CLOWN PONDI

OSBERT SITWELL

WHEN youth and strength had changed my blood
to fire

And every day passed long and glorious,
Another link in the eternal chain

Of life, I turned my love of luring and my sense
For all the unfathomable ways of God,

My burning sense for laughter and my joy
In crowds, in tumult, and in blazing lights,

To make my fellows see these qualities.
Thus I became "Clown Pondi," and my fame
Grew high in every theatre in the land.

I seem'd to draw fresh vigour from the crowds—

Loving the sea of faces, eyes with tears,
And gaping mouths wide open—loosely hung ;

The acrid, opalescent haze of smoke,
Hanging above the auditorium,

And over it the crowded galleries
That float far up, like painted prows of ships—

All overweighted and alive with men.
I loved the limelight, hard and white and strong,

The throbbing music and the theatre's scent,
That artificial, paper, printed scent

That sweeps across the footlights to the stalls.

Then was I pleased to strut about the stage,

With face dead white, and strangely purple nose—
Flamboyant in the garb of foolery—

To run about too quickly—and fall down ;

To make queer noises—inarticulate

Strange sounds and oaths, the signal for my share
Of cackling laughter.

Thus the years pass'd by
And—all unheeding—swept away my youth,

Till one sad night I heard a voice near by :

“ Ah ! Poor old man ! It's shocking they should
laugh ;

Mock his bent legs, and poor old toothless jaws ! ”

And then old-age rush'd down upon my head,

Each sombre year roll'd past in solemn time ;

In true perspective—to the jingling tune

That was my exit ; and so near came death,

Holding a mirror to my ridicule,

That show'd each line beneath the smearing paint,

Each wrinkle underneath the dab of rouge,

That in my sudden hopelessness I wept.

But as I left the stage with dragging feet,

With body bent with age, and crouching low,

I heard the applauding people pause and say,

“ Who but Clown Pondi could amuse us so ? ”

THE DISCOVERY

J. C. SQUIRE

THERE was an Indian, who had known no change,
Who strayed content along a sunlit beach
Gathering shells. He heard a sudden strange
Commingle noise ; looked up ; and gasped for
speech.

For in the bay, where nothing was before,
Moved on the sea, by magic, huge canoes,
With bellying cloths on poles, and not one oar,
And fluttering coloured signs and clambering
crews.

And he, in fear, this naked man alone,
His fallen hands forgetting all their shells,
His lips gone pale, knelt low behind a stone,
And stared, and saw, and did not understand,
Columbus's doom-burdened caravels
Slant to the shore, and all their seamen land.

STARLIGHT

J. C. SQUIRE

LAST night I lay in an open field
And looked at the stars with lips sealed ;
No noise moved the windless air,
And I looked at the stars with steady stare.

There were some that glittered and some that shone
With a soft and equal glow, and one
That queened it over the sprinkled round,
Swaying the host with silent sound.

“ Calm things,” I thought, “ in your cavern blue,
I will learn and hold and master you ;
I will yoke and scorn you as I can,
For the pride of my heart is the pride of a man.”

Grass to my cheek in the dewy field,
I lay quite still with lips sealed,
And the pride of a man and his rigid gaze
Stalked like swords on heaven's ways.

But through a sudden gate there stole
The Universe and spread in my soul ;
Quick went my breath and quick my heart,
And I looked at the stars with lips apart.

NIAGARA

J. C. SQUIRE

THE wide desolate river, the low bare shore,
Rocks and hurrying waters, and far ahead
A mist that joins the flat grey sky outspread
To the grey vague end of the waters ; the distant
 roar
That swells to thunder, the rush of the waves
 increasing,
The trees of Goat Island growing higher, till sudden
 are seen
Huge walls of the falls plunging down to the battered
 ravine,
Avalanches of wheeling water unceasing.

The foot of the falls : the slippery rounds of rock ;
The dark small earth, the crumpled rim of the sky,
The curling ruining columns that crash from on high
To the cloudy chasms with wild reiterate shock,
Hissing and hurrying cliffs of foam down-pouring :
Aloft, one curve like marble with smooth green face,
An awful illusion of stillness in the race
Of eternal Niagara louder and louder roaring.

Niagara, agara, agara, down the valley,
From the dragging drowning might of it went I away,
From the moving thunderous walls and the gulfs of
 spray
By a chaos of waters that eddy and rush and rally,
By the fortress flanks of the town of Niagara Falls,

That blackened and grim on the foaming tumult
frown
And westward to quieter tracks where the stream
deep down
Runs small in the cleft of its narrowing tree-clad
walls.

These gullies and bluffs and the rapids far below,
That giant's din from beyond, the scrub and the
grass,
They were all as they are when a savage's foot would
pass
Once in a month those centuries ago.
Will it come, the day of deserted stones crumbling
Under the sky, when a hunting savage again
Will pass not caring from whom were the stones that
remain,
Only hearing the noise of the fall's tumbling ?

America empty again, and beasts astray,
The forests growing again, the cities gone,
Fall'n, moss'd over, Niagara sounding on,
In a region where stilled are the voices of all our day ;
Not a house, not a fence or field from the lake to the
ocean,
No chimneys on the horizon, no smoke-trails hover-
ing,
Only brushwood and grass, spreading and covering
The broken proofs of our race's old devotion.

LATE SNOW

J. C. SQUIRE

THE heavy train through the dim country went
rolling, rolling,
Interminably passing misty snow-covered plough-
land ridges
That merged in the snowy sky ; came turning
meadows, fences,
Came gullies and passed, and ice-coloured streams
under frozen bridges.

Across the travelling landscape evenly drooped and
lifted
The telegraph wires, thick ropes of snow in the
windless air ;
They drooped and paused and lifted again to unseen
summits,
Drawing the eyes and soothing them, often, to a
drowsy stare.

Singly in the snow the ghosts of trees were softly
pencilled,
Fainter and fainter, in distance fading, into nothing-
ness gliding,
But sometimes a crowd of the intricate silver trees
of fairyland
Passed, close and intensely clear, the phantom world
hiding.

O untroubled these moving mantled miles of shadow-
less shadows,
And lovely the film of falling flakes ; so wayward
and slack ;
But I thought of many a mother-bird screening her
nestlings,
Sitting silent with wide bright eyes, snow on her
back.

RIVERS

J. C. SQUIRE

RIVERS I have seen which were beautiful,
Slow rivers winding in the flat fens,
With bands of reeds-like thronged green swords
 Guarding the mirrored sky ;
And streams down-tumbling from the chalk hills
To valleys of meadows and watercress-beds,
And bridges whereunder, dark weed-coloured
 shadows,
Trout flit or lie.

I know those rivers that peacefully glide
Past old towers and shaven gardens,
Where mottled walls rise from the water
 And mills all streaked with flour ;
And rivers with wharves and rusty shipping,
That flow with a stately tidal motion
Towards their destined estuaries
 Full of the pride of power ;

Noble great rivers, Thames and Severn,
Tweed with his gateway of many grey arches,
Clyde, dying at sunset westward
 In a sea as red as blood ;
Rhine and his hills in close procession,
Placid Elbe, Seine slaty and swirling,
And Isar, son of the Alpine snows,
 A furious turquoise flood.

All these I have known, and with slow eyes
I have walked on their shores and watched them,
And softened to their beauty and loved them
Wherever my feet have been ;
And a hundred others also
Whose names long since grew into me,
That, dreaming in light or darkness,
I have seen, though I have not seen.

Those rivers of thought : cold Ebro,
And blue racing Guadiana,
Passing white houses, high-balconied,
That ache in a sun-baked land,
Congo, and Nile and Colorado,
Niger, Indus, Zambesi,
And the Yellow River, and the Oxus,
And the river that dies in sand.

What splendours are theirs, what continents,
What tribes of men, what basking plains,
Forests and lion-hided deserts,
Marshes, ravines, and falls :
All hues and shapes and tempers
Wandering they take as they wander
From those far springs that endlessly
The far sea calls.

O in reverie I know the Volga
That turns his back upon Europe,
And the two great cities on his banks,
Novgorod and Astrakhan ;
Where the world is a few soft colours,
And under the dove-like evening
The boatmen chant ancient songs,
The tenderest known to man.

And the holy river Ganges,
His fretted cities veiled in moonlight,
Arches and buttresses silver-shadowy
 In the high moon,
And palms grouped in the moonlight,
And fanes girdled with cypresses,
Their domes of marble softly shining
 To the high silver moon.

And that aged Brahmapootra
Who beyond the white Himalayas
Passes many a lamassery
 On rocks forlorn and frore,
A block of gaunt grey stone walls
With rows of little barred windows,
Where shrivelled young monks in yellow silk
 Are hidden for evermore. . . .

But O that great river, the Amazon,
I have sailed up its gulf with eyelids closed,
And the yellow waters tumbled round,
 And all was rimmed with sky,
Till the banks drew in, and the trees' heads,
And the lines of green grew higher,
And I breathed deep, and there above me
 The forest wall stood high.

Those forest walls of the Amazon
Are level under the blazing blue,
And yield no sound but the whistles and shrieks
 Of the swarming bright macaws ;
And under their lowest drooping boughs
Mud-banks torpidly bubble,
And the water drifts, and logs in the water
 Drift and twist and pause.

And everywhere, tacitly joining,
Float noiseless tributaries,
Tall avenues paved with water :
 And as I silent fly
The vegetation like a painted scene,
Spars and spikes and monstrous fans
And ferns from hairy sheaths upspringing,
 Evenly passes by.

And stealthier stagnant channels
Under low niches of drooping leaves
Coil into deep recesses :
 And there have I entered, there
To heavy, hot, dense, dim places
Where creepers climb and sweat and climb,
And the drip and splash of oozing water
 Loads the stifling air.

Rotting scrofulous steaming trunks,
Great horned emerald beetles crawling,
Ants and huge slow butterflies
 That had strayed and lost the sun ;
Ah, sick I have swooned as the air thickened
To a pallid brown ecliptic glow,
And on the forest, fallen with languor,
 Thunder has begun.

Thunder in the dun dusk, thunder
Rolling and battering and cracking,
The caverns shudder with a terrible glare
 Again and again and again,
Till the land bows in the darkness,
Utterly lost and defenceless,
Smitten and blinded and overwhelmed
 By the crashing rods of rain.

And then in the forests of the Amazon,
When the rain has ended, and silence come,
What dark luxuriance unfolds

From behind the night's drawn bars :
The wreathing odours of a thousand trees
And the flowers' faint gleaming presences,
And over the clearings and the still waters
Soft indigo and hanging stars.

O many and many are rivers,
And beautiful are all rivers,
And lovely is water everywhere
That leaps or glides or stays ;
Yet by starlight, moonlight, or sunlight,
Long, long though they look, these wandering eyes,
Even on the fairest waters of dream,
Never untroubled gaze.

For whatever stream I stand by,
And whatever river I dream of,
There is something still in the back of my mind
From very far away ;
There is something I saw and see not,
A country full of rivers
That stirs in my heart and speaks to me
More sure, more dear than they.

And always I ask and wonder
(Though often I do not know it) :
Why does this water not smell like water ?
Where is the moss that grew
Wet and dry on the slabs of granite
And the round stones in clear brown water ?
—And a pale film rises before them
Of the rivers that first I knew.

Though famous are the rivers of the great world,
Though my heart from those alien waters drinks
Delight however pure from their loveliness,
And awe however deep,
Would I wish for a moment the miracle,
That those waters should come to Chagford,
Or gather and swell in Tavy Cleave
Where the stones cling to the steep ?

No, even were they Ganges and Amazon
In all their great might and majesty,
League upon league of wonders,
I would lose them all, and more,
For a light chiming of small bells,
A twisting flash in the granite,
The tiny thread of a pixie waterfall
That lives by Vixen Tor.

Those rivers in that lost country,
They were brown as a clear brown bead is,
Or red with the earth that rain washed down,
Or white with china-clay ;
And some tossed foaming over boulders,
And some curved mild and tranquil,
In wooded vales securely set
Under the fond warm day.

Okement and Erme and Avon,
Exe and his ruffled shallows,
I could cry as I think of those rivers
That knew my morning dreams ;
The weir by Tavistock at evening
When the circling woods were purple,
And the Lowman in spring with the Lent lilies,
And the little moorland streams.

For many a hillside streamlet
There falls with a broken tinkle,
Falling and dying, falling and dying,
 In little cascades and pools,
Where the world is furze and heather
And flashing plovers and fixed larks,
And an empty sky, whitish blue,
 That small world rules.

There, there, where the high waste bog-lands
And the drooping slopes and the spreading valleys,
The orchards and the cattle-sprinkled pastures
 Those travelling musics fill,
There is my lost Abana,
And there is my nameless Pharphar
That mixed with my heart when I was a boy,
 And time stood still.

And I say I will go there and die there :
But I do not go there, and sometimes
I think that the train could not carry me there,
 And it's possible, maybe,
That it's farther than Asia or Africa,
Or any voyager's harbour,
Farther, farther, beyond recall . . .
 O even in memory !

THE SHIP

J. C. SQUIRE

THERE was no song nor shout of joy
Nor beam of moon or sun,
When she came back from the voyage
Long ago begun ;
But twilight on the waters
Was quiet and grey,
And she glided steady, steady and pensive,
Over the open bay.

Her sails were brown and ragged,
And her crew hollow-eyed,
But their silent lips spoke content
And their shoulders pride ;
Though she had no captives on her deck,
And in her hold
There were no heaps of corn or timber
Or silks or gold.

THE FIFTEEN ACRES

JAMES STEPHENS

I CLING and swing
On a branch, or sing
Through the cool, clear hush of morning, O :
Or fling my wing
On the air, and bring
To sleepier birds a warning, O :
That the night's in flight,
And the sun's in sight,
And the dew is the grass adorning, O :
And the green leaves swing
As I sing, sing, sing,
Up by the river,
Down by the dell,
To the little wee nest,
Where the big tree fell,
So early in the morning, O.

I flit and twit
In the sun for a bit
When his light so bright is shining, O :
Or sit and fit
My plumes, or knit
Straw plaits for the nest's nice lining, O :
And she with glee
Shows unto me
Underneath her wings reclining, O :

And I sing that Peg
Has an egg, egg, egg,
Up by the oat-field,
Round the mill
Past the meadow
Down the hill,
So early in the morning, O.

I stoop and swoop
On the air, or loop
Through the trees, and then go soaring, O :
To group with a troop
On the gusty poop
While the wind behind is roaring, O :
I skim and swim
By a cloud's red rim
And up to the azure flooring, O :
And my wide wings drip
As I slip, slip, slip,
Down through the raindrops,
Back where Peg
Broods in the nest
On the little white egg
So early in the morning, O.

HATE

JAMES STEPHENS

My enemy came nigh,
And I
Stared fiercely in his face.
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
And stern I watched him with a narrow eye.
Then, as I turned away, my enemy,
That bitter heart and savage, said to me :
“ Some day, when this is past,
When all the arrows that we have are cast,
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate.
It may seem to us then a mystery
That we could hate each other.”

Thus said he,

And did not turn away,
Waiting to hear what I might have to say ;
But I fled quickly, fearing if I stayed
I might have kissed him as I would a maid.

ECSTASY

W. J. TURNER

I SAW a frieze on whitest marble drawn
Of boys who sought for shells along the shore,
Their white feet shedding pallor in the sea,
The shallow sea, the spring-time sea of green
That faintly creamed against the cold, smooth
pebbles.

The air was thin, their limbs were delicate,
The wind had graven their small eager hands
To feel the forests and the dark nights of Asia
Behind the purple bloom of the horizon,
Where sails would float and slowly melt away.

Their naked, pure, and grave, unbroken silence
Filled the soft air as gleaming, limpid water
Fills a spring sky those days when rain is lying
In shattered bright pools on the wind-dried roads,
And their sweet bodies were wind-purified.

One held a shell unto his shell-like ear,
And there was music carven in his face,
His eyes half-closed, his lips just breaking open
To catch the lulling, mazy, coralline roar
Of numberless caverns filled with singing seas.

And all of them were hearkening as to singing
Of far-off voices thin and delicate,

Voices too fine for any mortal mind
To blow into the whorls of mortal ears—
And yet those sounds flowed from their grave,
sweet faces.

And as I looked I heard that delicate music,
And I became as grave, as calm, as still
As those carved boys. I stood upon that shore,
I felt the cool sea dream around my feet,
My eyes were staring at the far horizon :

And the wind came and purified my limbs,
And the stars came and set within my eyes,
And snowy clouds rested upon my shoulders,
And the blue sky shimmered deep within me,
And I sang like a carven pipe of music.

THE HUNTER

W. J. TURNER

" But there was one land he dared not enter."

BEYOND the blue, the purple seas,
Beyond the thin horizon's line,
Beyond Antilla, Hebrides,
Jamaica, Cuba, Caribbees,
There lies the land of Yucatan.

The land, the land of Yucatan,
The low coast breaking into foam,
The dim hills where my thoughts shall roam
The forests of my boyhood's home,
The splendid dream of Yucatan !

I met thee first long, long ago
Turning a printed page, and I
Stared at a world I did not know
And felt my blood like fire flow
At that strange name of Yucatan.

O those sweet, far-off Austral days
When life had a diviner glow,
When hot suns whipped my blood to know
Things all unseen, then I could go
Into thy heart, O Yucatan !

I have forgotten what I saw,
I have forgotten what I knew,
And many lands I've set sail for
To find that marvellous spell of yore,
Never to set foot on thy shore,
O haunting land of Yucatan !

But sailing I have passed thee by,
And leaning on the white ship's rail
Watched thy dim hills till mystery
Wrapped thy far stillness close to me
And I have breathed, "'Tis Yucatan !

" 'Tis Yucatan, 'tis Yucatan ! "
The ship is sailing far away,
The coast recedes, the dim hills fade,
A bubble-winding track we've made,
And thou'rt a dream, O Yucatan !

ROMANCE

W. J. TURNER

WHEN I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatepetl
In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school—
Shining Popocatepetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy,
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away :

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower—
O shining Popocatapetl
It was thy magic hour :

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
They had stolen my soul away !

LACRIMÆ MUSARUM

(6th October 1892 : The Death of Tennyson)

WILLIAM WATSON

Low, like another's, lies the laurelled head :
The life that seemed a perfect song is o'er :
Carry the last great bard to his last bed.
Land that he loved, thy noblest voice is mute.
Land that he loved, that loved him ! nevermore
Meadow of thine, smooth lawn or wild sea-shore,
Gardens of odorous bloom and tremulous fruit,
Or woodlands old, like Druid couches spread,
The master's feet shall tread.
Death's little rift hath rent the faultless lute :
The singer of undying songs is dead.

Lo, in this season pensive-hued and grave,
While fades and falls the doomed, reluctant leaf
From withered Earth's fantastic coronal,
With wandering sighs of forest and of wave
Mingles the murmur of a people's grief
For him whose leaf shall fade not, neither fall.
He hath fared forth, beyond these suns and showers.
For us, the autumn glow, the autumn flame,
And soon the winter silence shall be ours :
Him the eternal spring of fadeless fame
Crowns with no mortal flowers.

What needs his laurel our ephemeral tears,
To save from visitation of decay ?
Not in this temporal light alone, that bay
Blooms, nor to perishable mundane ears
Sings he with lips of transitory clay.
Rapt though he be from us,
Virgil salutes him, and Theocritus ;
Catullus, mightiest-brained Lucretius, each
Greets him, their brother, on the Stygian beach ;
Proudly a gaunt right hand doth Dante reach ;
Milton and Wordsworth bid him welcome home ;
Keats, on his lips the eternal rose of youth,
Doth in the name of Beauty that is Truth
A kinsman's love beseech ;
Coleridge, his locks aspersed with fairy foam,
Calm Spenser, Chaucer suave,
His equal friendship crave :
And godlike spirits hail him guest, in speech
Of Athens, Florence, Weimar, Stratford, Rome.

Nay, he returns to regions whence he came.
Him doth the spirit divine
Of universal loveliness reclaim.
All nature is his shrine.
Seek him henceforward in the wind and sea,
In earth's and air's emotion or repose,
In every star's august serenity,
And in the rapture of the flaming rose.
There seek him if ye would not seek in vain,
There, in the rhythm and music of the Whole ;
Yea, and for ever in the human soul
Made stronger and more beauteous by his strain.

For lo ! creation's self is one great choir,
And what is nature's order but the rhyme
Whereto in holiest unanimity

All things with all things move unfalteringly,
Infolded and communal from their prime ?
Who shall expound the mystery of the lyre ?
In far retreats of elemental mind
Obscurely comes and goes
The imperative breath of song, that as the wind
Is trackless, and oblivious whence it blows.
Demand of lilies wherefore they are white,
Extort her crimson secret from the rose,
But ask not of the Muse that she disclose
The meaning of the riddle of her might :
Somewhat of all things sealed and recondite,
Save the enigma of herself, she knows.
The master could not tell, with all his lore,
Wherefore he sang, or whence the mandate sped :
Ev'n as the linnet sings, so I, he said :
Ah, rather as the imperial nightingale,
That held in trance the ancient Attic shore,
And charms the ages with the note that o'er
All woodland chants immortally prevail !
And now, from our vain plaudits greatly fled,
He with diviner silence dwells instead,
And on no earthly sea with transient roar,
Unto no earthly airs, he sets his sail,
But far beyond our vision and our hail
Is heard for ever and is seen no more.

No more, O never now,
Lord of the lofty and the tranquil brow,
Shall men behold those wizard locks where Time
Let fall no wintry rime.
Once, in his youth obscure,
The weaver of this verse, that shall endure
By splendour of its theme which cannot die,
Beheld thee eye to eye,
And touched through thee the hand
Of every hero of thy race divine,

Ev'n to the sire of all the laurell'd line,
The sightless wanderer on the Ionian strand.
Yea, I beheld thee, and behold thee yet :
Thou hast forgotten, but can I forget ?
Are not thy words all goldenly impressed
On memory's palimpsest ?
I hear the utterance of thy sovereign tongue,
I tread the floor thy hallowing feet have trod ;
I see the hands a nation's lyre that strung,
The eyes that looked through life and gazed on God.

The seasons change, the winds they shift and veer ;
The grass of yesteryear
Is dead ; the birds depart, the groves decay :
Empires dissolve and peoples disappear :
Song passes not away.
Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
And kings a dubious legend of their reign ;
The swords of Cæsars, they are less than rust :
The poet doth remain.
Dead is Augustus, Maro is alive ;
And thou, the Mantuan of this age and soil,
With Virgil shalt survive,
Enriching Time with no less honeyed spoil,
The yielded sweet of every Muse's hive ;
Heeding no more the sound of idle praise
In that great calm our tumults cannot reach,—
Master who crown'st our immelodious days
With flower of perfect speech.

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

WHEN you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep ;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled,
And paced upon the mountains overhead,
And hid his face amid a crown of stars.

AEDH WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

HAD I the heaven's embroidered cloths,
 Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
 Of night and light and the half-light,

I would spread the cloths under your feet :
 But I, being poor, have only my dreams ;
I have spread my dreams under your feet :
 Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

THE VOICE

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

THE wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away,
While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air ;
For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue ;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
“ When the wind has laughed and murmured and
 sung,
The lonely of heart is withered away ! ”

SONG AT SANTA CRUZ

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

WERE there lovers in the lanes of Atlantis :
Meeting lips and twining fingers
In the mild Atlantis springtime ?
 How should I know
If there were lovers in the lanes of Atlantis
When the dark sea drowned her mountains
 Many ages ago ?

Were there poets in the paths of Atlantis :
Eager poets, seeking beauty
To adorn the women they worshipped ?
 How can I say
If there were poets in the paths of Atlantis ?
For the waters that drowned her mountains
 Washed their beauty away.

Were there women in the ways of Atlantis :
Foolish women, who loved, as I do,
Dreaming that mortal love was deathless ?
 Ask me not now
If there were women in the ways of Atlantis :
There was no woman in all her mountains
 Wonderful as thou !

SEASCAPE

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

OVER that morn hung heaviness, until,
Near sunless noon, we heard the ship's bell beating
A melancholy staccato on dead metal ;
Saw the bare-footed watch coming running aft ;
Felt, far below, the sudden telegraph jangle
Its harsh metallic challenge, thrice repeated :
Stand by. Half-speed ahead. Slow. Stop her ! They
stopped.

The plunging pistons sank like a stopped heart :
She held, she swayed, a hulk, a hollow carcass
Of blistered iron that the grey-green, waveless,
Unruffled tropic waters slapped languidly.

And, in that pause, a sinister whisper ran :
Burial at sea ! A Portuguese official . . .
Poor fever-broken devil from Mozambique :
Came on half tight : the doctor calls it heat-stroke.
Why do they travel steerage ? It's the exchange :
So many million *reis* to the pound !
What did he look like ? No one ever saw him :
Took to his bunk, and drank and drank and died.
They're ready ! Silence !

We clustered to the rail,
Curious and half-ashamed. The well-deck spread
A comfortable gulf of segregation
Between ourselves and death. *Burial at sea . . .*
The master holds a black book at arm's length ;
His droning voice comes for'ard : *This our*
brother . . .

*We therefore commit his body to the deep
To be turned into corruption . . .*

The bos'n whispers
Hoarsely behind his hand : *Now, all together !*
The latch-cover is tilted ; a mummy of sail-cloth,
Well ballasted with iron, shoots clear of the poop ;
Falls, like a diving gannet. The green sea closes
Its burnished skin ; the snaky swell smoothes over . . .
While he, the man of the steerage, goes down, down,
Feet foremost, sliding swiftly down the dim water :
Swift to escape
Those plunging shapes with pale, empurpled bellies
That swirl and veer about him. He goes down
Unerringly, as though he knew the way
Through green, through gloom, to absolute watery
darkness,
Where no weed sways nor curious fin quivers :
To the sad, sunless deeps where, endlessly,
A downward drift of death spreads its wan mantle
In the wave-moulded valleys that shall enfold him
Till the sea give up its dead.

There shall he lie dispersed amid great riches :
Such gold, such arrogance, so many bold hearts !
All the sunken armadas pressed to powder
By weight of incredible seas ! That mingled wrack
No livening sun shall visit till the crust
Of earth be riven, or this rolling planet
Reel on its axis ; till the moon-chained tides,
Unloosed, deliver up that white Atlantis,
Whose naked peaks shall bleach above the slaked
Thirst of Sahara, fringed by weedy tangles
Of Atlas's drown'd cedars, frowning Eastward
To where the sands of India lie cold,
And heap'd Himalaya's a rib of coral
Slowly uplifted, grain on grain . . .

We dream

Too long ! Another jangle of alarum
Stabs at the engines : *Slow. Half-speed. Full-
speed !*
The great bearings rumble ; the screw churns,
frothing
Opaque water to downward-swelling plumes
Milky as wood-smoke. A shoal of flying-fish
Spurts out like animate spray. The warm breeze
wakens,
And we pass on, forgetting,
Toward the solemn horizon of bronzed cumulus
That bounds our brooding sea, gathering gloom
That, when night falls, will dissipate in flaws
Of watery lightning, washing the hot sky,
Cleansing all hearts of heat and restlessness,
Until, with day, another blue be born.

THE CRAGSMAN

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG

IN this short span
between my finger tips on the smooth edge
and these tense feet cramped to the crystal ledge
I hold the life of man.

Consciously I embrace
arched from the mountain rock on which I stand
to the firm limit of my lifted hand
the front of time and space :—

For what is there in all the world for me
but what I know and see ?

And what remains of all I see and know,
if I let go ?

With this full breath
bracing my sinews as I upward move
boldly reliant to the rift above
I measure life from death.

With each strong thrust
I feel all motion and all vital force
borne on my strength and hazarding their course
in my self-trust :—

There is no movement of what kind it be
but has its source in me ;
and should these muscles falter to release
motion itself must cease.

In these two eyes
that search the splendour of the earth, and seek
the sombre mysteries on plain and peak,
all vision wakes and dies.

With these my ears
that listen for the sound of lakes asleep
and love the larger rumour from the deep,
the eternal hears :—

For all of beauty that this life can give
lives only while I live ;
and with the light my hurried vision lends
all beauty ends.

COMMENTARY

IN compiling this collection of poems by poets who were alive when the selection was made, I had in mind the special needs of students of English poetry living outside the British Isles. To many of them the beauties of the changing English scene are only a matter for conjecture. A child who has lived all his life in Malaya, for instance, is not likely to respond easily to verses about snow and robins, and church bells ringing out upon New Year's Eve. In order to provide readers in the tropics with a typical English winter scene I have deliberately included Mr. Squire's "Late Snow," and for a similar reason I have chosen some poems that are frankly descriptive of life in different parts of the world. In making my choice I have always tried to select poems that will not present much difficulty when they are introduced to their pupils by local teachers overseas. My own experience in Malaya has shown me that there is a tendency to present poetry in the English schools either for its moral qualities or for purposes of memorizing, and not for the beauty that is in the poem. The purpose of this anthology is to give to those who read it some idea of the beauties of English poetry that are most likely to appeal to them.

Contemporary English verse has certain strongly defined characteristics. One of these is the tendency to deal with nature in great detail, employing all manner

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of unusual words and terms. Many of Mr. Edmund Blunden's poems would need lengthy explanation before they became comprehensible to people unfamiliar with English landscape and climate. The Sitwells, true poets, are concerned with a world of their own. So strange and unfamiliar are the persons and things in their poems that I have found it almost impossible to make a choice from them for this book. I have naturally ignored the authors who have found it impossible to conform to the ordinary rules of grammar and syntax as we understand them, and for another reason—his formidable erudition—I have only been able to include one poem by Mr. T. S. Eliot, slightly abridged.

To my great disappointment I discovered that copyright difficulties prevented the inclusion of any of the lovely lyrics of Mr. A. E. Housman, and the same reason compelled me to leave out both "The Bull" and "The Song of Honour" by Mr. Ralph Hodgson. It is some comfort to know that both these poems are available in several low-priced anthologies of contemporary verse.

In making the Commentary that follows, I have tried to put my notes in the briefest compass compatible with understanding of the poems by those for whom *Poets of Our Time* is intended. I have still unpleasant memories of the days when I was compelled to memorize bad verses in my childhood, and I earnestly hope that those who will be responsible for introducing the poems in this book to young students will do everything in their power, by simple explanation and by reading aloud, to present the beauty and the significance of the poems to their pupils. Much repetition by bad reading aloud and the taking of innumerable notes will make a young person hate a poem cordially. If the teacher or

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professor takes every care to see that the student grasps the main idea of the poem, its rhythm scheme, and its outstanding beauties, the purpose of my anthology will be served. It must never be forgotten that the finest poetry depends for its beauty upon nobility of thought and loveliness of expression. These should be allowed to speak for themselves. Relentless hammering home of a moral truth is to be avoided, or kept for some other lesson. It has no place in the appreciation of poetry.

For reading the proofs of this book or for various other kindly offices I must express my thanks to Miss Freda Holmdahl, Dr. R. O. Winstedt, C.M.G., Mr. H. R. Cheeseman, and to my students at Raffles College, Singapore. The help and advice of Dr. Richard Wilson have been invaluable, and my wife has done so much for the book that the least I can do is to dedicate it to her.

ERIC GILLETT.

NOTES ON SOME OF THE POEMS

Babylon (page 17)

This poem is an expression of the glamour that the beauty and mystery of the past exercise upon imaginative people of every generation. Mr. George Russell, poet and painter, a prominent member of the Irish literary movement which was at its height at the beginning of this century, lets his mind rove back to the delights of ancient Babylon. The Babylon of the poem is a place of the poet's imagining and not the town of history, which was probably, in places, squalid and dirty. It is the poet's privilege to omit the unpleasantnesses of life and to record things that kindle his imagination. The same idea is to be found in Mr. de la Mare's lovely "Arabia," which will be found in this anthology.

The Voice of Beauty drowned (page 19)

This poem, and the two that follow it, are the work of a poet who prefers to forget that he ever wrote them.

"The Voice of Beauty drowned" describes once more the poet's difficulty in expressing the beauty that is in his heart. The same idea, with slight variation, is to be found also in

Star-talk (page 22)

This jingle could only have been written by a true

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poet. It may not be fully appreciated on the Equator. Everywhere else it should be a great favourite.

Sonnet (page 24)

Here is a record of the artist's struggle to express the beauty of life in the form of poetry.

Excavation (page 25)

As the years go by a man's nature changes. Thought and outside influences mould him so that, often enough, a man has changed so much in middle age that those who knew him as a boy will hardly recognize a trace of their former friend when they meet him again.

Fame (page 26)

The elusive quality of fame.

Migration (page 27)

The poet reflects on his past, on the variety of human experience, and of the little that remains with him.

Mr. Clifford Bax is an interesting figure in English literature to-day. His volume of autobiography, *Inland Far*, is one of the best of its kind; his verses and short stories invariably possess considerable elegance of form and integrity of thought; his longest poem, "The Traveller's Tale," has been unduly neglected; and his plays, by which he is best known, are now performed with increasing frequency. Perhaps the best of the full-length plays are *The Venetian* and *Socrates*. Among the one-act plays, *The Poetasters of Ispahan* and *Square Pegs* are most popular.

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Tarantella (page 28)

Mr. Hilaire Belloc is one of the most versatile and accomplished writers of the day. History, biography, burlesque, poetry, and belles-lettres flow from his pen in a continual stream.

"Tarantella" is one of the most attractive and spirited of his poems. The Tarantella is a rapid, whirling Italian dance, and the metre of the poem reproduces admirably the vigour of the dance.

Nox Mortis (page 30)

I have deliberately avoided war poems in this anthology, but I include this one, written by Paul Bewsher, who was a pilot in the Royal Air Force during the war. "Nox Mortis" means "Night of Death." It describes the poet's feelings as night falls and he sets out over the enemy's country with his load of bombs. The last verse shows how unhappy a sensitive man feels when he knows that the bombs he drops may bring death and destruction upon harmless people against whom he has no personal enmity.

A Day that is Boundless as Youth (page 32)

Mr. Binyon's best-known poem is the majestic "For the Fallen," which has been set to noble music by Sir Edward Elgar, and is often sung at Armistice Day commemorations.

The idea in this poem is the seeming immortality of youth, endless and happy as a lovely English summer's day seems to a child.

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John Winter (page 34)

The love of men for the sea and for wandering to the distant places of the world is a common theme of the literature of all countries. This poem expresses as simply as possible the feelings and actions of one who feels the call so strongly that he leaves wife and children because he knows that he can have no peace of mind until he feels the deck-boards of a ship beneath his feet again.

Chinese Pond (page 37)

Mr. Edmund Blunden is one of the most prominent of the younger poets. His book of recollections, *Undertones of War*, written in prose and verse, has been acclaimed as one of the very best and most temperate of English war books. For some years Mr. Blunden was Professor of English at the Tokyo Imperial University. He has written valuable critical works on Leigh Hunt, John Clare, and others. His own poetry is occasionally overburdened by detail, and, in his Nature poems, he often employs rare and difficult words. Recently he was made a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and it is good to know that a man of letters with such varied gifts will play his part in informing the minds of undergraduates. His sympathy with the young is beautifully expressed in "The Author's Last Words to his Students." "Chinese Pond" is characteristic and purely descriptive. The use of the unusual word "channering," which is not to be found in the Oxford Dictionary, and is probably an invention of the author's, is just what one expects to find in a poem by Mr. Blunden.

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Sick-bed (page 38)

The troubled fancies of a patient during feverish illness are faithfully and poetically recorded in these verses. His eyes wander idly about the room, ranging from the flies upon the ceiling to the array of old books on the shelves. The "1790 twelves" are the duodecimo volumes that were popular at that time. Then the tired mind begins to work vaguely and unprofitably until the patient is suddenly brought back to conscious life with a jerk. There is a step upon the path outside, where there should be no one at that hour. The sounds seem to gather volume, to approach, and finally to pervade the sick-room, and the patient, like a frightened child, buries his face in the pillows and prays for sleep.

Far East (page 41)

Another poem written by the author out of his Japanese experience. Like many another European, Mr. Blunden carried the memory of English country scenes in his heart even when he was singing the praises of the lovely Japanese landscape. He draws a parallel between the rustic (Giles) of the West and his Oriental counterpart. Haulms are stalks.

The Author's Last Words to his Students (page 43)

I find it very easy to sympathize with and to understand Mr. Blunden's charming and modest farewell to his students. Any one who loves English literature, and tries to impart his own appreciation of it to indulgent and kindly pupils, will be conscious sometimes of his own shortcomings and lack of ability for the task.

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Those who read this poem will feel that Mr. Blunden's pupils at Tokyo Imperial University were fortunate in their professor. It is obvious that Mr. Blunden returned the compliment.

Atlantis (page 44)

Mr. Gordon Bottomley is best known for his two small books of poetry, *Chambers of Imagery*, and for his poetic plays, which are, on the whole, more convincing on the printed page than on the stage. Atlantis, according to the old tradition, was a great island to the west of the Pillars of Hercules, opposite to Mount Atlas. Fuller information about it may be found in any classical dictionary. The keynote of this poem is to be found in the first line of the third verse.

Life (page 45)

The poet marvels at the wonder of human existence.

A Dynasty (page 46)

The writer feels that the wise man is he who flies from the world's turmoil. It is better to sit beside a waterfall with butterflies around one than it is to meddle in the affairs of the great and to be ambitious oneself. There is more than a hint of Touchstone's attitude towards life in this poem.

The Dromedary (page 47)

This is a vivid and sympathetic picture of one of the oddest of all the animals. If you want to write verse, try and describe, in metre, some of the birds and animals you have seen. It is an excellent exercise.

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A Ballade of a Book-reviewer (page 48)

Mr. G. K. Chesterton is a fine poet, a strong prose writer, and a most versatile man of letters, like his friend Hilaire Belloc. In these verses he bemoans the task of the literary critic, faced with a pile of unimportant books on all manner of subjects. Perhaps some of the books are important after all, but in his present state, tired with much reading, he feels that a simple tale of cowboys and Red Indians will suit him best. Then his mood changes. He laments that he himself, like so many others, often prefers the second-rate to the best.

He realizes that one cannot attain to an appreciation of all that is best in life and love, literature and art, without conscious effort. As Mark Pattison said when he was writing about Milton: "An appreciation of Milton's poetry is the reward of consummate scholarship."

Thunderstorms (page 49)

Mr. W. H. Davies has led an eventful life, which he described in a delightful autobiographical volume, *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*. He is a Welshman, and no English writer takes greater care to express himself in verse with such simplicity. His thoughts are so clearly and succinctly set down that no explanation of these poems of his is necessary. A classical dictionary alone is needed.

I Heard the Old Men (page 56)

As in Mr. Binyon's poem, "A Day that is Boundless as Youth," the reader receives from this poem an impression of youth's refusal to believe that its fire and liveliness

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Arabia (page 73)

This is the poet's dream country. The reader should refer to the comment on the same poet's "Tartary."

Suppose (page 74)

Once more the reader is transported to an enchanted region. Notice how the metre conveys the excitement and rapture of the child who is dreaming this happy dream.

To my Son (page 78)

Mr. John Drinkwater is another man of letters who has been successful in many different literary forms. His famous play, *Abraham Lincoln*, is the best known of his works, but scarcely less popular is the jolly country play, *Bird-in-Hand*. His poetry is usually unambitious, simple, and sincere. "To my Son," which is less known than many of his other poems, is, perhaps, the most delightful of them. $X = O$, written in blank verse, about the Trojan War, is the best of his shorter plays. It shows the same sympathy with youth that is to be found in "To my Son."

Journey of the Magi (page 81)

At the present time Mr. T. S. Eliot has a very considerable following among intellectuals. One competent critic has announced that he believes that this poet will have a very great influence upon those who come after him. Time has an awkward way of reversing judgments of this kind. Sometimes in his verse Mr. Eliot writes simply and with great effect. Other poems are an odd

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compound of quotations and allusions which can only be partially unravelled by reference to the author's notes and to the authorities mentioned in them. It is possible that even after all this research the reader's mind may not be satisfied. I agree with Mr. Arthur Symons that true poetry cannot be overlaid with a veneer of showy cleverness, and there are times when it seems to me that Mr. Eliot subordinates everything else to a kind of intellectual sleight-of-hand.

"Journey of the Magi" is one of the author's earlier poems. It describes the visit of the three kings to Bethlehem on the night of the birth of Jesus Christ. The last verse may at first sight appear difficult, but the general meaning is that the birth of Christ was an event of high import for many of the races of the world.

Say not that Beauty (page 83)

The quest for beauty in life and beyond it has been the theme of many lives.

The Machine (page 84)

Mr. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, a friend of Rupert Brooke, whom he commemorates in the sonnets that I have printed here, is one of the best of contemporary narrative poets. Often enough his theme is the ruthlessness of things and people, and in "The Machine" he has a subject dear to his heart. This tale in verse of a printing press is one of the best things he has ever done, and it will appeal to any one who has seen machinery in action.

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Rupert Brooke (page 89)

I think there can be few people who saw Rupert Brooke without being startled by the beauty of his appearance and the nobility of his expression. Once I heard him read his poems in the room behind the Old Poetry Bookshop. It was in the summer of 1914, soon after he had returned from his visit to the South Seas and America. His voice, I remember, was so husky from a cold that an old lady asked him sharply to speak up so that she could hear the poems, and Brooke apologized because he could not do so. It seemed to me on that day that he was the ideal poet, and when I learnt, only a few months later, that he was dead, I was young and enthusiastic and foolish enough to feel that English poetry had died with him. Many of Brooke's friends felt like this about him, and Mr. Gibson's sonnets are a worthy tribute to the charm of Brooke's radiant personality.

The Ice-cart (page 93)

This poem will be read with peculiar sympathy by Europeans in the hot places of the earth. The office-worker dreams, and, in the oppression of noonday heat, is visited by strange, cool dreams, only to be awakened to the torrid reality by the crack of a carter's whip in the street outside.

Fallen Cities (page 96)

Mr. Gerald Gould is now best known as the accomplished critic of fiction on the staff of the *Observer*. He is also a good poet. "Fallen Cities" tells how a little heap of sand set the poet's mind working so that he built an imaginary city for himself.

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Ducks (page 97)

This is one of the best and most whimsical of modern bird poems. It is written in a colloquial, humorous style, but there is beauty in it too, the sudden, unexpected beauty that you will find in the appearance of a duck just when you have been laughing at it.

Stupidity Street (page 100)

It is a great misfortune that it is impossible to print here either "The Song of Honour" or "The Bull." Like Mr. A. E. Housman, Mr. Ralph Hodgson has published very little poetry, and the two long poems are by far the most important of his works. I advise any one who is interested in English poetry to read Mr. Hodgson's *Poems*, and also the two small volumes written by Mr. A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems*. Both of these books can now be bought in cheap editions.

Poets, Painters, Puddings (page 101)

Mr. Richard Hughes is known best for his plays and for his novel of child-life, *High Wind in Jamaica*. He has an original mind, and often enough, under a deceptively flippant exterior, the reader will discover sound sense. Read this poem with care, and do not think that it is only a careless rhyme.

The Singing Furies (page 103)

This is a picture of a summer thunderstorm in Wales, and the havoc and destruction it brings with it.

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The Orange (page 105)

The orange is the charm which will bring back the sights and sounds of the East.

Now to the World (page 106)

The poet closes a chapter in his life. It seems to me that in the East the European has rarely the same affection for his house or room that he usually has in the West. For one thing, in the neighbourhood of the Equator one does not need protection from the cold. The hearth is not the centre of things as on a bitter winter's day. There is privacy and intimacy about the atmosphere of a well-loved room in England. One has often returned to it and been welcomed by a glowing fire, after being chilled by frost or east wind, choked by gulps of fog on a raw night, or soaked to the skin by the cold rains of February. The room of which the poet writes is a friendly place, sanctified by memories of the friendships and ardours of youth. The time has come to leave it, and it is well that the door shall not be closed without a tribute of farewell.

Fear (page 108)

Mr. Rudyard Kipling is one of the most discussed of English writers. His verses have always provoked, and will long continue to provoke, controversy. I think that most of them, like many of the verses of Sir Walter Scott, are not poetry, but that they are accepted as the real thing by those who do not usually care for poetry. No one will deny that Mr. Kipling has a strongly marked sense of rhythm, and that he can con-

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jure up a picture in a flash, with the use of a very few words. He is one of the world's great short-story writers, but his verses are often enough either full of improbable slang or couched in phrases that remind one of those to be found in the leading article of a newspaper. There are two famous exceptions, the Sussex poem, and the poem on flowers.

"Fear" is good, thrilling verse.

Envoi (page 110)

Mr. P. H. B. Lyon is now headmaster of Rugby, one of the greatest of all the English schools, and famous, among other things, for its memories of Dr. Arnold and for *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Like "Now to the World," "Envoi" is also a poem of farewell.

An Old Song Re-sung (page 111)

The appointment of Mr. John Masefield to the position of Poet Laureate was a most popular one. Like his predecessor, Mr. Masefield has a great love of his craft, and although no one could possibly consider him to be as scrupulous an artist as Robert Bridges, those who have read his small prose books on *Shakespeare*, *The Old Front Line*, and *Gallipoli* will be the first to admit that Mr. Masefield has the love of England and of poetry very much at heart. At his best he is a narrative poet without equal in our time, but he is prone to strange lapses, when he seems to be saying "See how bad I can be." Then in a moment there will come a change, and, as in "Reynard the Fox," the reader's pulse will be stirred and his blood will run faster as he takes a part in that great chase. There are few poets alive who can

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surpass Mr. Masfield as a master of rhythm when he is at his best, and to hear him read poetry comes to most people as a revelation. There is no posing or attitudinizing—only a quiet, unemotional rendering of the poem that is grave and reflective, but, when the hunt is up, Mr. Masfield lets himself go, and gives humour to his reading, and speed and enthusiasm. There are no “gestures” or other of the abominable tricks which have been introduced into the reading of verse by those who know little or nothing about it. The meaning and the metre are allowed by Mr. Masfield to do all that is necessary, and the expression in his voice is never allowed to detract from either.

“An Old Song Re-sung” is a pleasant, coloured variation of a famous nursery rhyme.

A Ballad of John Silver (page 112)

John Silver is the famous pirate in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. There are not many pirate ships sailing the seas to-day, and when one reads this song about their habits, one feels that there is nothing to regret in their almost complete extinction.

Cargoes (page 114)

This poem has found its way into almost every anthology of modern times. I felt that there might still be a few who had not read it, and this made me decide to include it here. The Encyclopædia should provide you with pictures of the three widely different types of craft commemorated in the poem.

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Child to Parents (page 115)

Earlier in this book I have printed Mr. Drinkwater's poem "To my Son," and it seems only fair that a child should be given an opportunity to reply to his parents. Miss Meynell's poem is only a trifle, but it is a beautiful trifle. Do you think you could add a few more verses that would expand her idea?

Trees (page 116)

Mr. Harold Monro's services to modern English poetry are great. He founded the Old Poetry Bookshop in Devonshire Street, which was so convenient a meeting-place for the poets. The Poetry Bookshop has now moved to a more central site near the British Museum.

Mr. Monro is fond of writing about animals, and also about inanimate things such as trees and furniture. This is an extract from one of his longest poems.

Rumour (page 118)

The subject of Rumour or Scandal has occupied the minds of many poets since Virgil wrote about it in the *Æneid*. The scandalmongers are at work, and the poet imagines that their words are left lying about in great heaps that trip one up and impede one as one carries out the ordinary business of life.

The Gazelles (page 119)

Mr. Sturge Moore has been called a difficult poet, but I do not think that readers will find these three poems of his hard to understand. The gazelle is one of the

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most beautiful of animals, and Mr. Moore's account of gazelle-coursing by chetahs is a beautiful and a barbaric thing. "The Gazelles" is a poet's lament for the disappearance and destruction of so much that is beautiful on the face of the earth.

The Deed (page 125)

This poem is a pæan in praise of youth and beauty and strength.

Rower's Chant (page 126)

The most interesting thing about this poem is the rhythm of it. The poet, by his use of metre, reproduces the strong, sweeping strokes of the skilled oarsman.

Felix Antonius (page 127)

Sir Henry Newbolt has gained a great reputation as a poet who delights to commemorate deeds of patriotism and courage. Most of his best-known poems are familiar in schools throughout the Empire. This slight set of verses records the feelings of a contented old man.

Night Rhapsody (page 128)

Mr. Robert Nichols wrote one of the finest of the war poems, "Fulfilment." Although he is still a young man he has not published any poetry recently.

"Night Rhapsody" is a magnificent expression of peace and thankfulness. Then is the time for reflection, for old troubles, loves, and adventures now recollected in tranquillity. This is one of the most beautiful and thoughtful of contemporary poems.

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Fulfilment (page 131)

No other poem expresses so admirably the amazing sense of comradeship experienced by those who fought together in the war. The loves and griefs of the past have been swept away, to be replaced by the all-powerful affection the poet feels for his men.

When all is Said (page 132)

This is a despondent and highly pessimistic poem which I have included for its conciseness, economy of words, and precision of meaning. The poet's conception of the end of the world is unfolded in a few verses. Technically this is a most interesting poem.

A Fruit Piece (page 133)

Mr. Eden Phillpotts is one of the most prolific of modern writers. He is best known for his stories of life in the west of England, and for his plays of rustic life in the same locality. "A Fruit Piece" is a remarkable piece of cleverness. The writer's ingenuity in fitting a variety of fruits into the compass of a sonnet deserves notice.

Tuscany (page 134)

Miss Sackville-West has a wonderful eye for landscape, and a considerable talent for portraying it in verse. "The Land," which she wrote several years ago, is one of the finest sustained poems of the last decade.

From "Tuscany" it is possible to gather a vivid impression of the country, with its long, white, dusty

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roads. It is a land rich in history, commemorated in literature, and blessed by the warm sun.

I recommend to those who wish to learn more of this country the late Maurice Hewlett's *Road in Tuscany*.

Bee-master (page 136)

There are many words in this extract that may be new to you. If there are, look them up, learn their meaning, and try to use some of them in your own writing. Most people have a very small store of words at their disposal. Increase your stock when you can, and you will find that it becomes increasingly easy to express yourself in words and in writing. You can learn, too, from this poem something of the habits of the bees. If you have not done so, read Maurice Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee*.

Full Moon (page 139)

This little poem has a gay and delicate lilt. The poet must have had a happy tune running in her head and have written these words to it. That is the way in which many of the most beautiful poems in the world have been written.

Strangeness of Heart (page 140)

No poet felt the bitterness of war, the terrible massacre of millions of the young, the tremendous waste and futility of the whole business, more than Siegfried Sassoon. His satirical war poems were written with the whole force of his being in them, and they should be read by all those who still think that war is a gay, romantic affair. Recently he published two books which will appeal to all who care to understand the

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depth of affection felt by a deeply sensitive man for his country. These two books, written in prose, are *Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man* and *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*.

Mr. Sassoon expresses very finely a thought which must have come to many people—that as soon as one loses zest and interest in the simple things of life, it is time that one should die. I like to keep a similar idea in my mind. The moment that I am too old to learn, then there is no longer a reason for me to exist.

Early Chronology (page 141)

This is a picture of a lecture, and the reflections that arose in the poet's mind as a result of it.

Grandeur of Ghosts (page 142)

The poet's anger is aroused when he hears men speak idly or contemptuously of great men, whose works have served as "lamps for his gloom."

Dreamers (page 143)

In these three verses is to be found the attitude of the ordinary man who was called upon to leave his home and to endure the unutterable filth and squalor of trench warfare. Less bitter than many of Mr. Sassoon's poems, this one gives as clearly as any other his feeling about war.

Songbooks of the War (page 144)

The poet is afraid that with the passing of time the horrors of war will be forgotten, and that young men

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will sigh once more for the imaginary glories and adventures of modern mechanical warfare. There will still be survivors of the war of 1914-18 to remind the young men that war is not what they think it, but the young will not heed these warnings. They will say, as young men have always said, "Poor grandad's day is done."

Everyone Sang (page 145)

This poem must have been written on the day of the Armistice. No longer need men feel that they have been caught in a trap.

The Storm (page 146)

Mr. Edward Shanks has published little poetry in recent years, but about ten years ago he was considered to be one of the most promising of the younger poets. His art is largely pictorial, and he has not troubled himself very much with literary innovations. His verse is straightforward and needs no explanation.

Clown Pondi (page 149)

Mr. Osbert Sitwell and Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell, with their sister, Miss Edith Sitwell, have struck out a new line in poetry, which usually deals with a world of unreality that passes through the mind with the strangeness of a nightmare. All three have great talent, but, like other clever people, they do not take very much trouble to explain themselves to their readers. Their attitude towards their readers seems to be "Take it or leave it."

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"Clown Pondi" treats a subject that is a favourite one with novelists and poets. The speaker is supposed to be an old circus clown who has spent all his life in the roving life of the show people. He pours out his memories, his triumphs in the past, and how he has devoured the applause of the thousands who have seen him perform. One day he chanced to hear a spectator remark that he was an old man, too old to be cracking jokes and performing antics in a circus ring. Then, for the first time, he suddenly felt his age. In the pleasure of acting he had actually forgotten how old he was, but now, in an instant, he was made to feel every year of it in true perspective. Death was near. The old clown had only to look in his mirror and he would realize how near. The chance remark he had heard brought him to tears, but, just as he was leaving the stage, words of praise reached him: "Who but Clown Pondi could amuse us so?" and he was comforted, and thought no more of death or of retiring from the circus.

The Discovery (page 151)

Mr. J. C. Squire's services to English literature are difficult to estimate, but he has worked so hard for other writers, printed their works in the *London Mercury*, and done everything in his power to impede the encroachment of commerce and industrialism over the English scene, that there are many who have forgotten that, primarily, he is a poet, one of the very best English poets now living.

"The Discovery" tells of the effect upon the mind of a simple American Indian when he first sees the fleet of Columbus steal into the bay.

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Starlight (page 152)

The poet's pride and ambition, high at first, are humbled and softened by the sight of the stars.

Niagara (page 153)

An attempt to express in verse any great natural phenomenon is always interesting. This poem is also extremely impressive. Through the centuries and all the changes they have brought with them Niagara goes pouring on its mighty flood. So it was hundreds of years ago when only an occasional savage was there to listen to the roar of the waters. Perhaps the time will come when the great clamorous American cities are no more, and Niagara will continue to fall "in a region where stilled are the voices of all our day."

Late Snow (page 155)

This poem and Robert Bridges' "London Snow" are two of the most beautiful poems about the English winter scene. Notice how the verse reproduces the sullen rumble of a train passing through a snow-covered country. This effect is obtained largely by the poet's masterly use of the long "o" sounds.

Rivers (page 157)

The poet makes his praise of rivers. He begins with the two great English streams, Thames and Severn, and then his fancy takes him to mightier rivers all over the world. From the rivers of Europe he wings his way to the East and then passes to the Amazon, with its yellow

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waters running between dark green walls of jungle. In the end he comes back again to the West of England, which is his own home country, and then a doubt strikes him. If he revisits that part of his native land, will the moorland streams of his boyhood take his imagination captive as they used to do years ago?

The Ship (page 164)

This little poem records an incident which has been treated often and at greater length by Mr. Masfield.

The Fifteen Acres (page 165)

This is a bird's song, and the rhythm is the rhythm of swinging and swooping through the air. It is only a careless song, full of melody and youth and happiness, a call to the lazy to be up and doing.

Mr. James Stephens is an Irishman who has written several delightful books of fantasy, full of good prose and charming lyrics, of which the best is *The Crock of Gold*.

Hate (page 167)

Love and hate are often more closely connected than men think.

Ecstasy (page 168)

This is a poet's dream of beauty. You will see how the imagination of the creative artist can be set working by the sight of a marble frieze depicting boys searching for shells upon the seashore. Great art has the power to comfort and content those who are sensitively minded. This frieze made the poet happy, and he sang "like a carven pipe of music."

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The Hunter (page 170)

Here is an example of the poet's skilful use of a romantic name, which runs through his poem as a refrain that is friendly and musical.

Most children have a land of the imagination in which they take refuge from the occasional stupidity of grown-up people. When they grow up, the magic land recedes and disappears. It is no longer a sanctuary. In "The Hunter," Yucatan is a symbol for the country of the poet's youthful dreams.

Romance (page 172)

Again the poet allows his fancy to roam in his imagined land of South America, the place of his boyhood's dreams. Notice how the names Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, and then Popocatapetl, are made to serve as a refrain in alternative verses.

Lacrimæ Musarum (page 174)

Sir William Watson is old now and writes little, but there were times in the past when he was seriously considered for the honour of the Laureateship. His poetry is always dignified, sometimes pompous and rather stiff. I have included here a characteristic poem which conveys the sorrow of the Muses on the death of the great poet Tennyson.

Coming, as it does, between the almost colloquial verse of W. J. Turner and the lovely lyrics of W. B. Yeats, this funeral ode may appear formal and artificial, but a little patience will reveal the patent sincerity and

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the deep feeling that animated the poet's mind when he wrote it in the early 'nineties.

First of all the poet protests that Tennyson has no need of the perishable laurels of this commemoration when his own verse has made him immortal. He is now with the other immortals. The great poets, who are dead, salute him. He has been reclaimed by the spirit of universal loveliness, and all earthly beauty is his shrine. Then the poet goes on to discuss the mystery of poetry :

“ The master could not tell, with all his lore,
Wherefore he sang, or whence the mandate sped.”

Tennyson sang naturally as a bird sings, and now he has left the world and is, instead, “ with diviner silence.” And then comes an allusion to the poet's hero-worship for Tennyson, when he was a boy and met him :

“ And touched through thee the hand
Of every hero of thy race divine.”

In time, the poet says, kingdoms and empires may pass away, but poetry will always remain.

In some of his other poems Sir William Watson may have marred his verse with stiffness, and twisted and difficult imagery. “ *Lacrimæ Musarum* ” is a fine poem, free from such errors of taste.

When you are Old (page 178)

Mr. William Butler Yeats first became prominent in the Irish literary movement at the beginning of the century. With J. M. Synge and Lady Gregory he had much to

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do with the direction of the famous Abbey Theatre, Dublin, which has contributed good plays and players to the English-speaking theatre for the last thirty years. Above all, Mr. Yeats is a great lyric poet, probably the greatest poet now living who uses English as his medium. In his earlier days Mr. Yeats's poetry was mystical, dreamy, and luxurious. Now he believes in the utmost economy, and expresses his ideas and feelings with a sparing use of words. It is almost as though the rich and beautiful leaves had dropped from the boughs, leaving behind them a silhouette which is graceful and shapely, but stark and almost hard in outline. The three poems I have included belong to the poet's earlier period and method.

Song at Santa Cruz (page 181)

Mr. Francis Brett Young is better known as a novelist than as a poet. *Portrait of Clare* and *My Brother Jonathan* are both fine books, and Mr. Brett Young shows unusual power in delineating his women characters.

"Song at Santa Cruz" is another poem about the fabled Atlantis, a song of beauty and youth.

Seascape (page 182)

This poem describes one of the most impressive incidents that can occur at sea. The ship's bell is sounded. The hands muster aft. The ship is stopped, and the brief ceremony follows. In a minute or two the bell rings again, and one feels the strain of the starting engines as the ship gathers way once more.

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The Cragman (page 185)

Mr. Geoffrey Winthrop Young is a famous climber, and when misfortune overtook him and he lost a leg, he promptly set to work and invented a telescopic substitute. This enables him to pursue his favourite hobby almost as easily as when he had both his legs. I give this information as evidence of Mr. Young's indomitable spirit. "The Cragman" is a poem of the joys of climbing, its ardours, endurances, and recompenses.

I am indebted to Dr. Richard Wilson for the two following notes :

"The mode of printing this example of free verse is helpful, and might be generally adopted in order to show at a glance which and how many lines are end-stopt. After all, the printing of a capital letter at the beginning of each line of verse is a mere printer's convention, which might be abolished with scarcely any loss."

"The last four lines are particularly interesting, in view of ideas expressed by other poets on the same subject—namely, Is there any beauty apart from the observer of beauty ? "

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